Men-at-Arms

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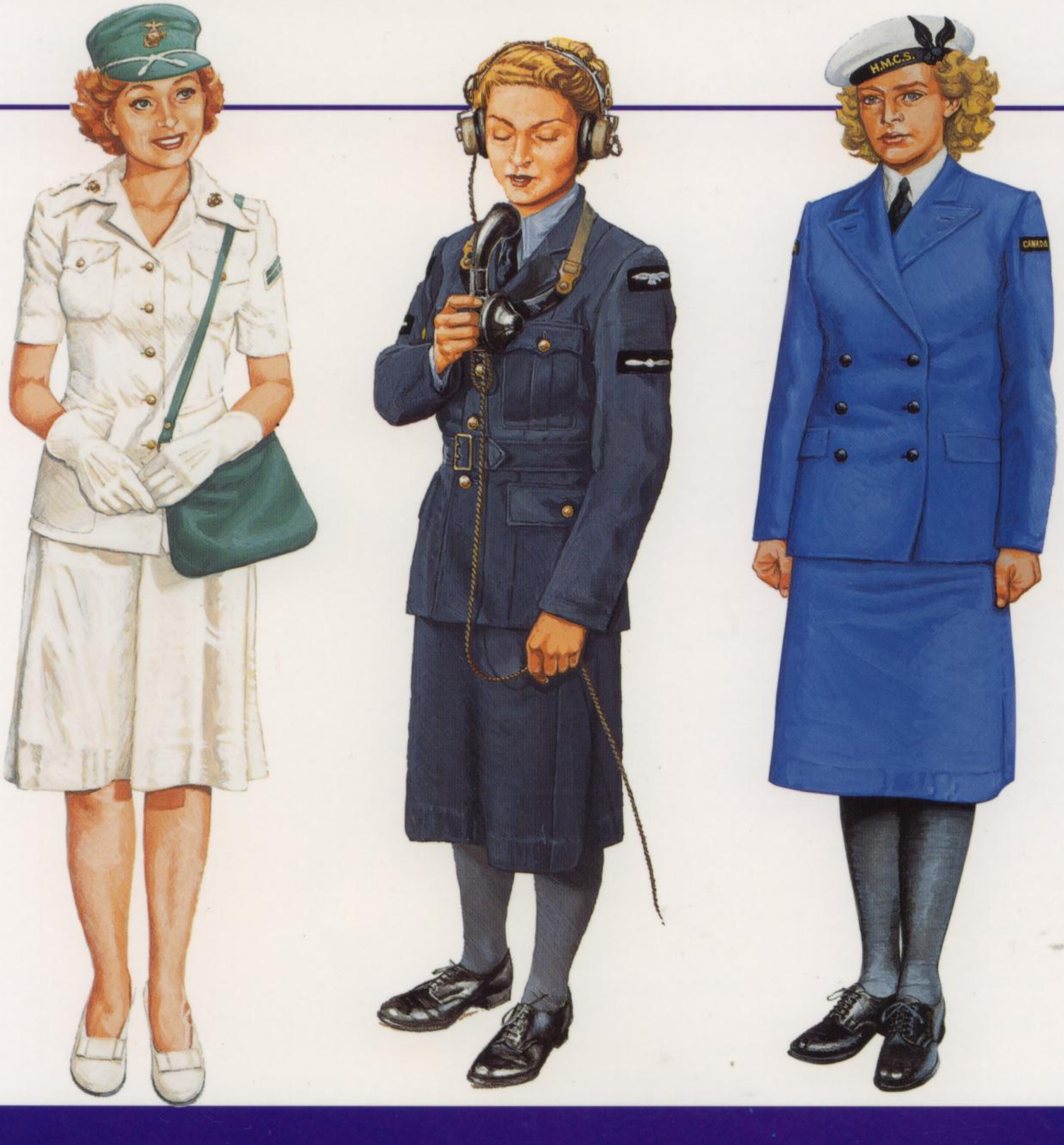
World War II Allied Women's Services



Martin Brayley • Illustrated by Ramiro Bujeiro

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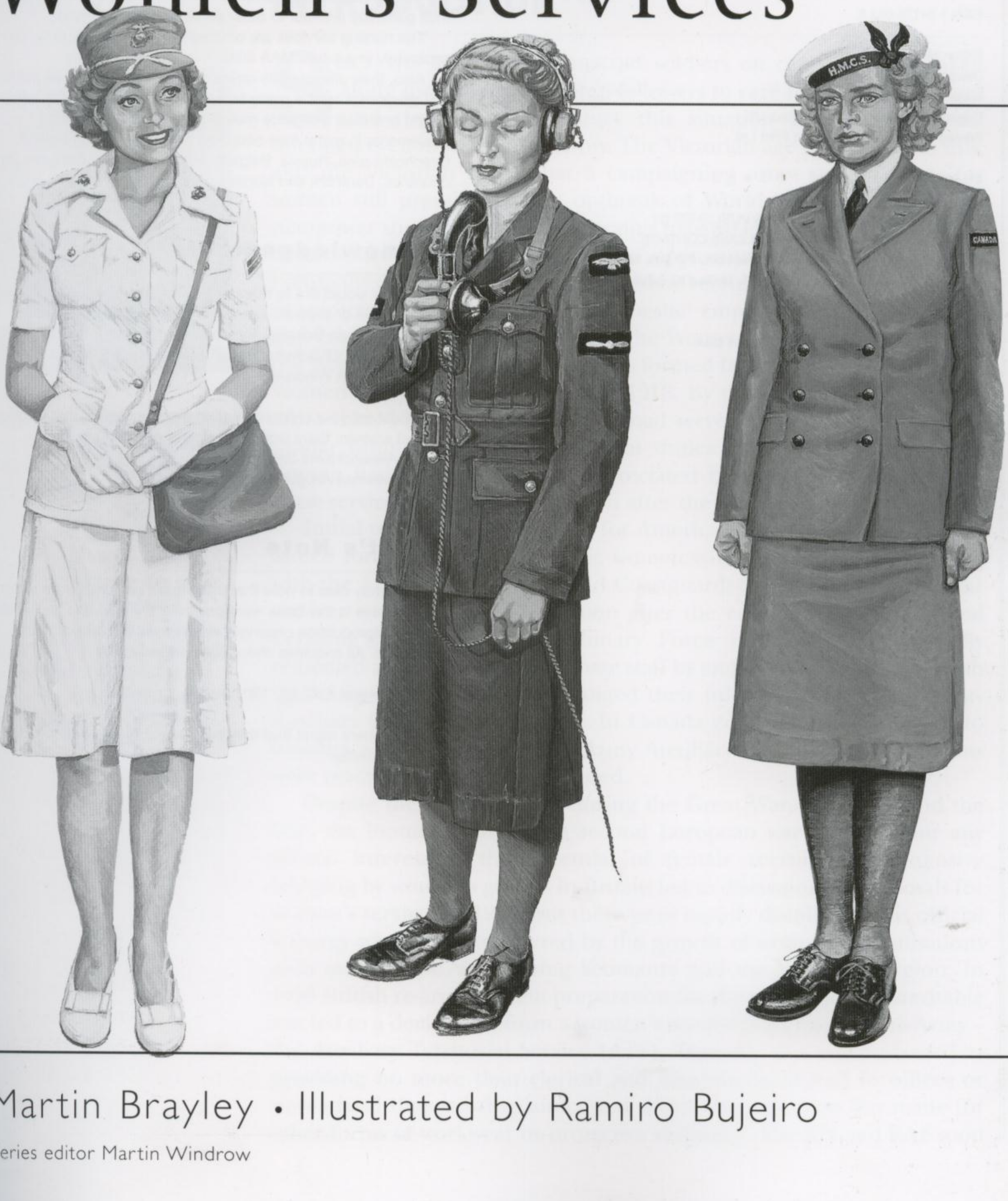

Martin Brayley • Illustrated by Ramiro Bujeiro

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Author's Note

A single Osprey book could only barely describe even the ATS in any detail; for brevity it has thus been necessary to adopt a bias towards the British and American services, particularly the British ATS and American WAC. Although only brief notes can be devoted to other organisations, every effort has been made to at least make reference to all the Allied women's services – that is, those officially attached for duty with the armed forces, and auxiliary to them or otherwise embodied. The experiences of the female services of the Western nations tended to parallel each other in general terms, and particularly with regard to early official suspicion, later appreciation, expansion and widespread employment, recruiting, and clothing development. Quoted examples of British and US experience are thus generally relevant to other services and/or nations.

The nursing services are omitted here as they are to be covered separately in a future MAA title.

Also, their unavoidable omission from this book does not imply any disrespect for the many tens of thousands of women who fought and died alongside men in partisan and resistance movements in many Axis-occupied nations including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Belgium, Holland, France, Italy, the Balkan countries, Denmark and Norway.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions or support: Lynette and Toby (for their enduring patience), Laszlo Bekeski, Tony and Joan Poucher, Brian Schultz & estate of TSgt.V.P.Schultz, Robert F.Stedman, Ed Storey, Simon Vanlint & Martin Windrow.

'You must tell your children, putting modesty aside, that without us, without women, there would have been no spring in 1945.'
Nonna Alexandrovna Smirnova
Russian woman AA gunner, Great Patriotic War

Artist's Note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the Publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:

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The Publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

WORLD WAR II ALLIED WOMEN'S SERVICES

An image which did not ruffle the conservative prejudices of the authorities: a British WRNS chef surrounded by the tools of her trade. She wears a white cook's hat and apron, and the blue and white pinstripe cook's coverall with navy blue trim to the collar and cuffs and white plastic buttons. The rate badge for a Leading Wren is worn on the left sleeve; senior rates wore a representation of their cap badge on the cook's cap. (IWM A9746)

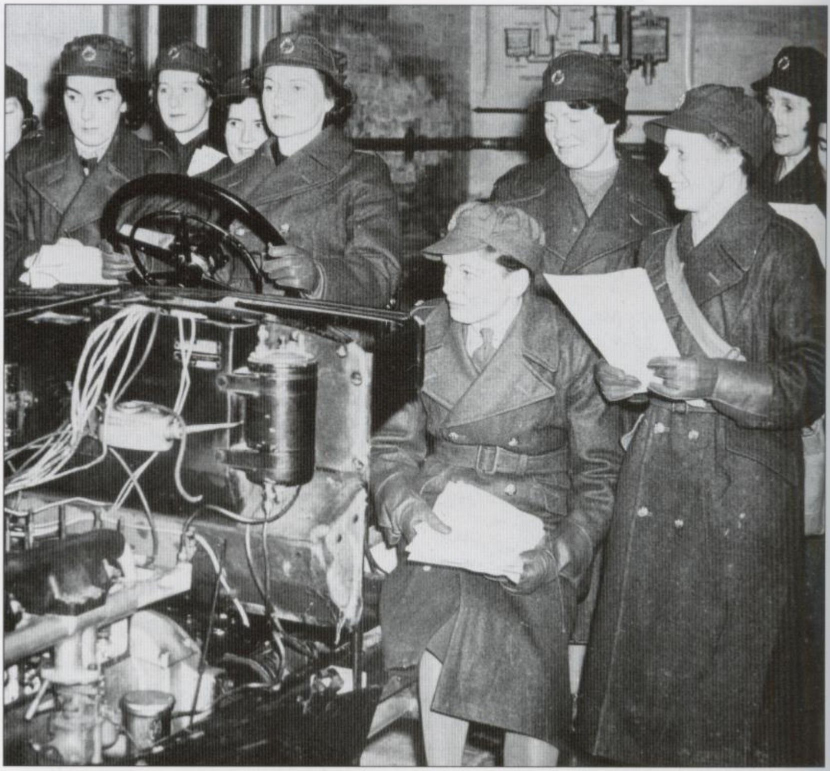
INTRODUCTION

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY soldiers on campaign had taken along their wives and camp-followers to care for their needs, and until the mid-19th century this situation had been at least tolerated even in the British Army. The Victorian age put an end to this; and the Victorian belief that a campaigning army was no place for women still prevailed at the outbreak of World War I. However, the manpower shortage caused by Britain's massive losses in that war rapidly became acute; and in 1917, despite open unease, the Army Council eventually conceded that women could be recruited to replace otherwise fit soldiers in rear areas and in 'domestic' employment such as clerical and cooking duties. Thus was born the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps; the Women's Royal Naval Service was formed in November 1917 and the Women's Royal Air Force in April 1918. By the end of the Great War more than 100,000 British women had served in uniform, releasing a similar number of men for combat duties. While the efforts of the women had been grudgingly appreciated by the military authorities, these services were disbanded soon after the Armistice.

Initial resistance to proposals for American women to serve with the armed forces was also overcome, women volunteers eventually serving with the Army, Navy, Marines and Coastguard; as in Great Britain, their services were dispensed with soon after the end of the war. (General Pershing's American Expeditionary Force in France had partially remedied an acute shortage of base staff by employing over 1,100 British QMAACs – the WAAC had changed their title to Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps in April 1918). In Canada consideration was given to forming a Canadian Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, but no decisions were reached before the war ended.

Despite the precedent set during the Great War, in Britain and the USA the looming threat of a second European war did not spur any official interest in the potential of female recruitment. Extensive lobbying by women's groups in Britain led to discussion of proposals for women's services in 1936, but these were rapidly dismissed. This official lethargy was luckily countered by the growth of women's organisations such as the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and the Woman's Legion. In 1938 British re-armament in preparation for the now probably inevitable war led to a decision to form a women's service in support of the Army – the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). Typically, this was envisaged as providing no more than clerical and administrative staff in offices or stores (and thus wearing tunics and skirts – no provision was made for other forms of workwear or protective clothing). The RN and RAF soon followed suit, both forming women's branches in 1939.

Lethargy had also greeted American attempts to form women's services; but in May 1941, some six months before America's entry into World War II, a bill was introduced advocating the formation of a Woman's Army Auxiliary Force, to begin recruiting in 1942.



A group of British women transport drivers receive instruction on vehicle maintenance; all wear the first pattern ATS cap with cloth strap worn over the crown, a distinction of MT drivers. These 'members' (the collective term for ATS other ranks) are all ex-First Aid Nursing Yeomanry/Women's Transport Service, whose MT companies joined the ATS *en masse* in 1939. Male pattern greatcoats were issued prior to the widespread issue of an ATS greatcoat in 1941; however, a limited issue of this rare belted greatcoat had been made earlier to MT companies and a few other trade categories.

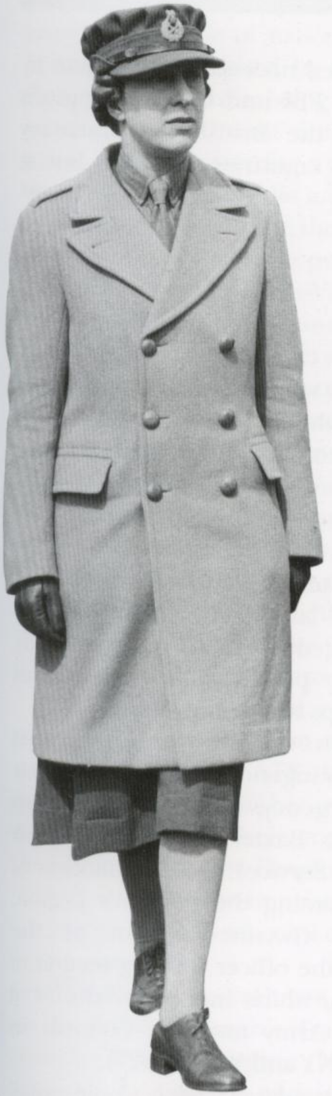
By this time the ATS were already expanding their duties, following a statement made to the House of Commons in April 1941 which gave the service full military status, and added that numbers and employment would be increased and would include anti-aircraft and searchlight duties. Despite the ATS's move into operational roles the WAAC continued to plan for an office-bound and 'domestic' service. WAAC liaison teams visiting ATS units did not accept British predictions that the US forces would eventually employ their women on much more active tasks, or advise that these roles (and suitable clothing) should be planned in advance. The WAAC persisted in their limited approach; while they learned for themselves the true adaptability of women to a wide range of military employment, many 'Waacs' would suffer from inadequate clothing for the jobs they found themselves undertaking.

The Commonwealth nations all followed the British lead and eventually formed their own auxiliary services along the lines of the WRNS, ATS and WAAF. They adopted similar uniforms, organisational and rank structures, and often received British officers and instructors on attachment. In Continental Europe women had been recruited into war work; but they were essentially civilians, employed only as medical assistants or ambulance drivers, with no units comparable to the British women's services being formed before Europe fell to the German onslaught. Refugees from Europe and foreign nationals living in Great Britain joined a number of women's auxiliary units which served alongside male volunteers for the Allied forces in Britain.

The question of morality

One of the greatest worries for all the fledgling women's services was the subject of conduct. Vague and discreditable allegations about the sexual morality of women in uniform had led to the setting up of a Royal Commission in Great Britain during World War I, following a drop in recruiting occasioned by tales of gross misconduct; but these were found

ATS Controller Commandant HRH the Princess Royal (King George VI's sister) reviewing troops, c1943. She wears the male 'Coat, British Warm' of the approved pattern for wear with service dress by officers of the rank of substantive colonel and above. Note the double row of leather buttons. This coat was an optional garment for officers below the rank of colonel, to be worn only when not parading with troops. The gold wire cap insignia is that of Army general officers; before October 1941 senior ATS officers had worn a similar badge but with the sword and baton replaced by the letters 'ATS'. (IWM H28859)



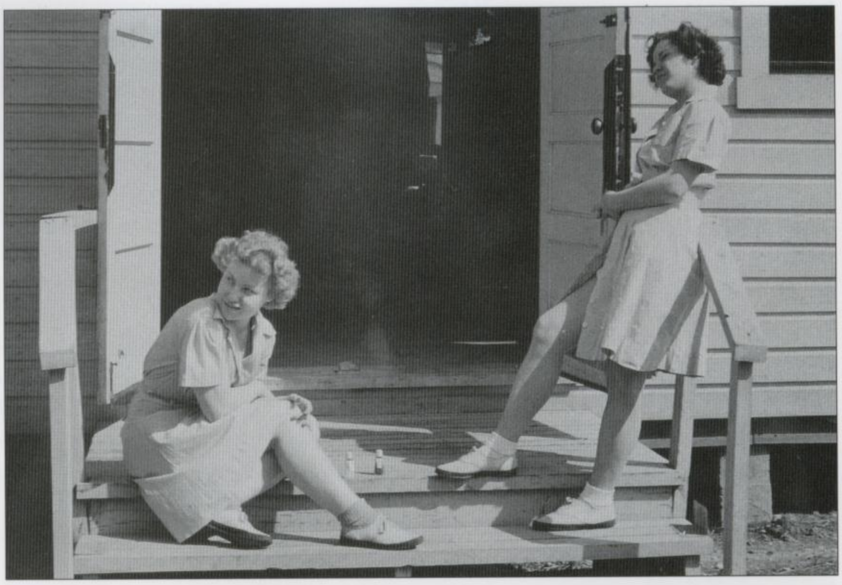
to be wholly mischievous and false. During early World War II the subject again raised its ugly head; at first officially ignored, the problem eventually became such a threat to morale and recruitment that in Great Britain a parliamentary committee was set up, tasked with assessing the truth behind tales of drunkenness, promiscuity and illegitimate pregnancy, particularly in the ATS. The committee's findings were presented to Parliament in August 1942; they proved conclusively that the women of the services had considerably lower illegitimate pregnancy rates than civilians in comparable social groups (0.6 per cent as against 2.1 per cent).

The problem of malicious gossip was not confined to Britain. In the USA slanderous rumours about the WAAC reached epidemic proportions in 1943, with a naive but widespread belief that 90 per cent of Waacs were prostitutes, 40 per cent of whom were pregnant, and that a good percentage were lesbians. The publication and broadcasting of such ludicrous figures by the media and the churches provoked God-fearing middle class America into a real resistance to its women serving in the forces. (In reality, the WAC discharge rate due to pregnancy in 1942–1945 averaged 0.4 per cent.)

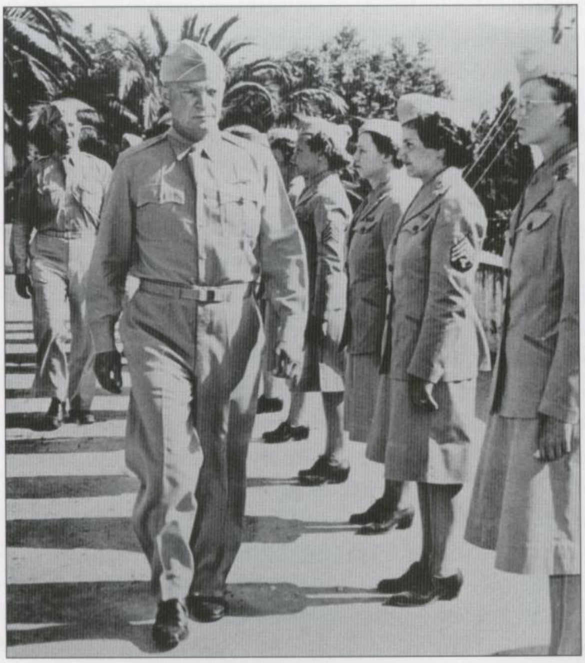
Crank letters and spiteful gossip were to be expected, but this deep tide in public opinion caused serious concern about the damage to recruitment and morale. The FBI was asked to look into the rumours, although eventual responsibility for an investigation fell to G2 (Military Intelligence), who even considered possible enemy influence as a source. The results of the enquiry were less acceptable than enemy activity would have been, and said much about contemporary attitudes to the role of women in American society. Army personnel, soldiers' wives, jealous civilians, thoughtless gossips, fanatics and discharged Waacs were often found to be the source of the malicious rumour-mongering. On the negative side, prostitutes were found to be operating in the services; but these were professionals who had slipped through the screening process and joined the military in an attempt to broaden their client base – they were soon discovered and dishonourably discharged. As for enemy influence, the Axis radio station DEBUNK had made a broadcast stating that 20 Waacs had been returned from North Africa due to pregnancy; in reality, one married Waac had been returned to the US shortly after arriving in theatre. (Like most Axis propaganda, the broadcast fell on deaf ears and had little effect.)

Female homosexuality was not a crime under English law, but it did have a disciplinary aspect within the military. Reported cases of lesbianism in the ATS were few, frequently being masked by or confused with the strong friendships that developed between women. Where a problem was perceived it was generally dealt with by a discreet posting; in a very few cases promiscuous lesbians were discharged. In the USA a report by the Inspector General showed that, as with pregnancy, the instances of homosexuality were fewer than in the civilian population. WAAC officers were cautioned not to jump to erroneous conclusions about women who were masculine in appearance or declined male company; War Department Pamphlet 35-2 advised that physical shows of emotional demonstrativeness by women were not to be judged against similar but socially and legally unacceptable acts between male personnel. It was accepted that the occurrence of homosexuality in the

Two US Army Wacs relax outside their 'Bivou-Wac' (barrack block). Both wear the cotton seersucker Suit, WAC, Exercise, with its full-length button front, and canvas shoes (see Plate F1). The Wac at right has undone most of the lower buttons, displaying a good deal of thigh and the edge of the matching 'modesty' bloomers. The Wac at left is drying her nail varnish... The wearing of make-up was accepted within the women's services; it was felt as necessary for a woman's morale to wear make-up as it was for a man to be clean-shaven, but garish or over-enthusiastic application was not allowed and shades had to be approved by commanding officers.



BELOW **General Eisenhower, Commander Allied Forces North African Theatre of Operations, inspects a WAC detachment. They wear the early cotton summer uniform, later replaced by a lighter tropical worsted fabric, with male issue Cap, Garrison, Khaki. Ike spoke very highly of his Wacs, helping to counter the hysterical negative publicity surrounding the corps during its early days.**



WAAC was so rare that no action was deemed necessary, other than by limited reference during medical lectures. FBI and G2 investigations reached similar conclusions to those of the British parliamentary committee. Servicewomen deserved their countries' respect; but it would be hard won, and slow in coming.

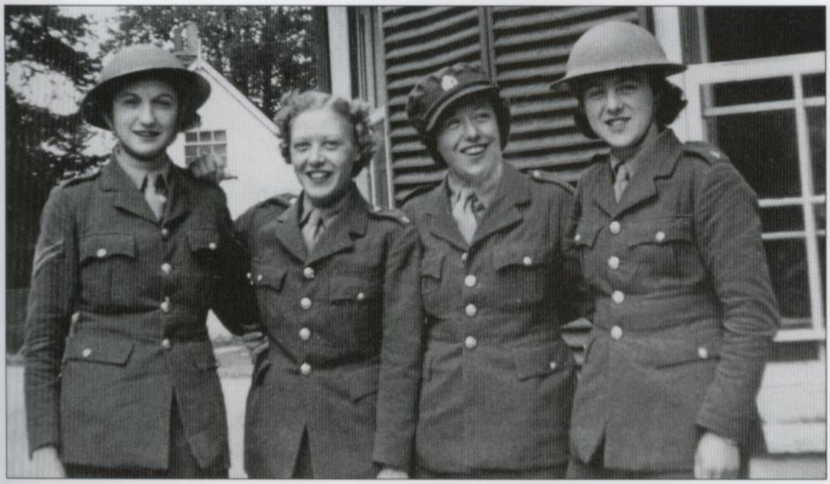
GREAT BRITAIN

Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS)

During the 1914–18 war two of the voluntary women's organisations that had assisted the British Army in France were the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and the Woman's Legion; the FANY provided ambulance drivers while the Woman's Legion supplied both contract cooks and MT drivers. Although the WAAC (QMAAC), WRNS and WRAF were disbanded post-war the FANY and WL, being civilian organisations, managed to retain their identity during the inter-war period, although general interest in such groups had diminished.

By the mid-1930s the British government recognised that contingency planning for war was a matter of urgency. Lengthy discussions took place with Miss Baxter Ellis of the FANY (Women's Transport Service); the Marchioness of Londonderry representing the Woman's Legion; and Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan of the Emergency Service (the officer training section of the Woman's Legion, which had received official recognition by the Army and Air Councils in 1935 – as had the FANY and WL in 1927).

A scheme was formulated which would entail



British Expeditionary Force, France, 1940. These three Volunteers (privates) and a Sub-Leader (corporal) wear the first pattern ATS tunic with integral cloth waistband, which was not particularly well cut. Many were later modified by having a belt added, conforming to the new 1941 pattern tunic which was smarter and better fitting. Two wear the Mk II helmet; one, the first pattern cap, which was identified by its cloth chin strap and the side curtain and peak reinforced by lines of stitching.

recruitment of over 20,000 women; these 'members' were to be attached to the Territorial Army in peacetime, but would be embodied into the regular army during time of national emergency. This new Auxiliary Territorial Service was authorised by Royal Warrant on 9 September 1938 (Army Order 199), its role being to provide women volunteers to undertake certain non-combatant duties in connection with the military and air forces. Although wearing a military uniform the women were not initially deemed members of the armed forces; because of this their rank badges and titles were not to be the same as those worn by the regular army, nor did they receive the same privileges and international protection.

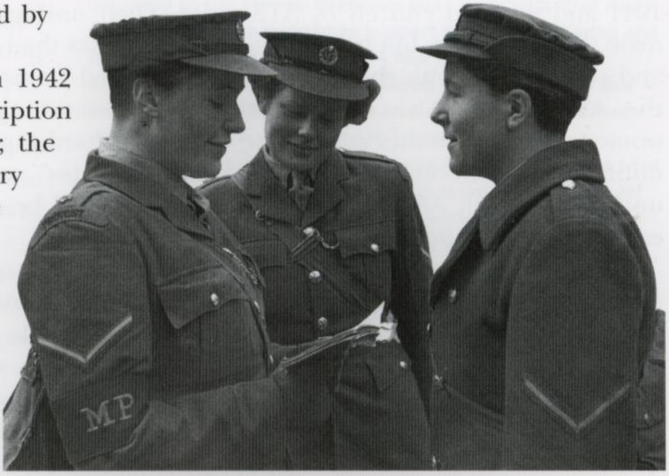
Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan was appointed Chief Controller and Director ATS from 1938 until 1941. During this time she fought long and hard for the women's service to be accepted as a part of the Crown forces; and final acceptance of the ATS came on 25 April 1941, with the introduction of the Defence (Women's Forces) Regulations, affecting all of the women's services. Amongst its most important provisions were the commissioning of female officers, and a declaration that women enrolled for service with the military (WAAF, ATS, and the medical and nursing services) were now deemed to be members of the armed forces of the Crown with military rank, female officers enjoying equal status to male officers. On 26 June 1941, shortly after achieving this goal, Dame Helen was relieved by Chief Controller Jean Knox.

An Order in Council issued on 5 March 1942 approved a proclamation authorising conscription of women into the ATS, WRNS and WAAF; the women of Britain thus became liable for military service alongside their menfolk under the National Service Act. Despite the act over 500 British women were imprisoned for refusing to engage in war work, civil defence duties or military service.

The ATS was to embrace the MT sections of the FANY (Woman's Transport Service) and the Woman's Legion (Motor Transport Training Company); and it was these two

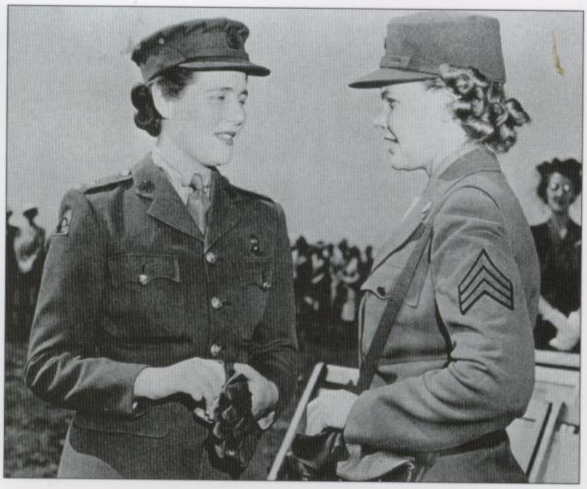
February 1942: 'Redcaps' of an ATS Provost unit check the AB64 paybook of an ATS lance-corporal. The ATS Provost Wing was formed in February 1942; staff wore service dress and an ATS cap with wire crown stiffener and red cover, as illustrated. This was soon replaced by the male pattern stiff SD cap with red cover (see Plate B1). The title 'PROVOST' in black on a scarlet backing was worn at each shoulder.

Non-provost ATS members attached to the Corps of Military Police wore the CMP's badge pinned to the left breast; this was not worn by the ATS Provost, as they were policewomen in their own right and not attached to the CMP. (IWM H17145)



ATS Ranks

Pre-June 1941	*June 1941*	*Army equivalent*
Chief Controller	Chief Controller	Major-General
Senior Controller	Senior Controller	Brigadier
Controller	Controller	Colonel
Chief Commandant	Chief Commander	Lieutenant-Colonel
Senior Commandant	Senior Commander	Major
Company Commander	Junior Commander	Captain
Deputy Coy.Cdr.	Subaltern	Lieutenant
Company Assistant	Second Subaltern	2nd Lieutenant
(no rank authorised)	Warrant Officer I	Warrant Officer I
Senior Leader	Warrant Officer II	Warrant Officer II
Section Leader	Sergeant	Sergeant
Sub-Leader	Corporal	Corporal
Chief Volunteer	Lance-Corporal	Lance-Corporal
Volunteer	Private	Private



Subaltern Mary Churchill (left), youngest daughter of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, served with a mixed battery of AA Command. She wears the black-on-red command shoulder insignia, and the bronze RA flaming grenade above her left breast; this display of the badge of the unit to which ATS women were attached was authorised in May 1940.

Subaltern Churchill (today, Lady Soames) is in conversation, c1943, with a US Army WAC sergeant who wears winter service dress and carries the russet leather Bag, Utility, WAC, and Gloves, Leather, Dress, Women's. The bag is worn in the manner adopted between June and November 1943 – on the left with strap over left shoulder; before and after these dates it was worn on the left with the strap across the body and over the right shoulder. The rank chevrons appear to be the silver-on-black type. This photo shows an excellent profile of the 'Hobby hat'.

organisations which would have the greatest influence on the uniforms of the new service. At the time of their formation in 1938 it had not been envisaged that the ATS might ever need anything other than service dress. This short-sighted view fortunately was not shared by all staff officers, in particular Lt.Gen. Sir Frederick Pile, the GOC-in-C of Anti-Aircraft Command. It was at his request that secret experiments were carried out as early as 1938 to establish the suitability of women for service on AA gun sites. Soon after the outbreak of war women were indeed employed within AA Command, but only on limited non-operational tasks.

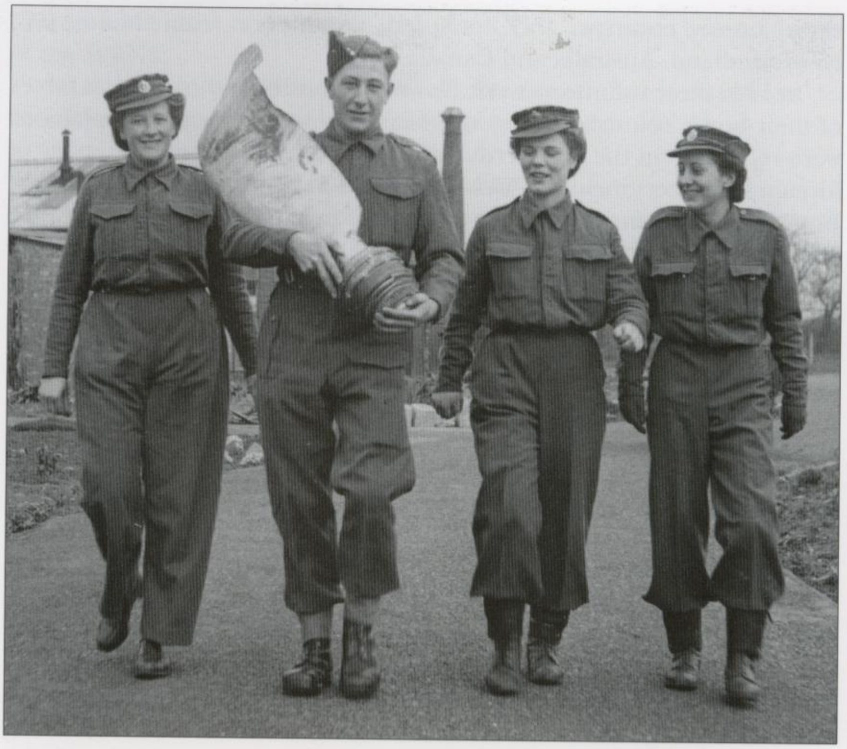
The introduction of mixed-sex AA batteries in 1941, and the large numbers of 'Ats' required, highlighted an already serious shortcoming in the ATS kit list that could only reasonably be filled by a uniform such as the man's Battledress, Serge – a form of dress that would also prove indispensable for many other ATS trade groups. Before the acceptance that BD was needed by the ATS, and as early as 1939, many small trade groups had regularly required additional non-issue clothing. These items were normally 'pooled' and only drawn as required. More often than not these items were as issued to male soldiers, with consequent problems in sizing and fitting. The first truly operational ATS unit within AA Command was an 'experimental' searchlight unit set up in April 1941 and manned entirely by ATS ranks. Their uniforms consisted of male BD – ill-fitting, but better suited to their tasks than the ATS jacket and skirt – worn with the black Royal Armoured Corps beret bearing the ATS badge. The experiment was a resounding success, the women proving that they could cope with all the hardships of an isolated military post. Soon afterwards 'mixed batteries' were employed universally within AA Command, their first 'action' being reported in early September 1941.

The subsequent rapid expansion of the ATS and the number of roles it performed led to a dramatic increase in the size and complexity of the ATS wardrobe. The inadequacy of the sizing of male BD led to an ATS version being produced in specific female sizes and in a finer 'Saxony serge'. The issue of ATS BD and other uniform items was not restricted exclusively to the service. Many other organisations received quantities of ATS clothing, although never sufficient to fulfil all of their requirements; these included, amongst others, the Army nursing services, Entertainment National Service Association (ENSA), United Nations Relief & Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and the British Red Cross (BRC).

The ATS of 1945 was a very different service from that which received its royal assent in 1938. The conscription of women authorised in 1942 had allowed for rapid expansion of all the women's services, and the consequent release of even more men for combat duties at a time when the Allies were preparing for the liberation of mainland Europe. The peak ATS strength of 210,308 was reached in mid-1943. By 1945 the initial five employment groups of cook, clerk, orderly, storewoman or driver had risen to 77 skilled trade groups, ranging from draughtswoman to masseuse, and 37 non-tradeswoman employments ranging from actress to librarian. Despite the fact that the ATS ranks were replacing men on a one-to-one basis in most employment, they received only two-thirds of male pay rates – a disadvantage universal throughout the Allied women's services.

A great number of ATS ranks had served overseas; before January 1945 all had been volunteers, but in that month a parliamentary decision allowed all single women to be drafted overseas. In August 1941 just 57 Ats were serving in the Middle East; this number had risen to 4,196 by June 1945, a month which also saw 9,543 Ats serving in NW Europe. ATS ranks also served in the Mediterranean, Africa, the USA, Canada, the Caribbean and India, as well as locations as diverse as Eritrea and Cyprus.

A number of 'enemy aliens' – nationals of countries at war with Britain, who had fled their homelands and who were considered refugees from the Nazis – were recruited into the ATS on a limited basis. They served in Allied Volunteer Platoons and were generally restricted to domestic employment. Women born overseas but of British parents were permitted to join the ATS; these volunteers wore a shoulder title showing



A trophy for the mess hall: a battered propeller blade from a Messerschmitt Me410, shot down by a mixed AA battery during a raid over London. The women wear the first pattern Blouse, Battledress, ATS, with Slacks, ATS, brown service shoes (left) and Boots, Ankle, ATS, with leather Anklets, ATS (right). An austerity pattern blouse appeared from 1941, without pocket pleats and with exposed buttons; the boots were also shortened from 11-eyelet to 8-eyelet pattern.

Mixed-sex batteries were introduced to Anti-Aircraft Command in 1941; by September 1943, 48,950 women were serving in heavy and 1,637 in light units, 9,671 of these as fire controllers in HAA units; and by the end of 1944 women outnumbered men. 93rd Searchlight Regt was staffed entirely by 'Ats'. In November 1944, 139 (Mixed) HAA Regt deployed to NW Europe to relieve male units with 21st Army Group which were needed to support the Rhine crossing and which – unlike the mixed units – had no experience of engaging the German V1s then being targeted against the port of Antwerp. By the end of January 1945 this unit had accounted for 19 of these flying bombs.

Such was the esteem in which the ATS gunners were held that ranks serving in mixed batteries were accorded Royal Artillery titles (Gunner, Lance-Bombardier, Bombardier) while serving with the unit, and were also allowed to wear the RA white lanyard and RA blue and red field service cap. (IWM H34381)

their home country, and included volunteers from Malta GC, Newfoundland, Australia and Canada.

In 1944 these volunteers were allowed to transfer to the women's forces of their home countries if they wished. Additionally, 'local' ATS platoons were recruited in the Mediterranean and Middle East from a number of foreign volunteers including Greek Cypriots, Palestinians and Arabs.

Among the honours and decorations awarded to members of the ATS were 238 Mentions in Despatches, one French Croix de Guerre with silver star, four US Bronze Stars, and three US Bronze Stars with Mention in Despatches.

Further material on ATS uniforms will be found in the captions to the photographs and to Plate B.

Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS)

The Admiralty raised proposals for the formation of the WRNS on 11 February 1939; in April Mrs (later Dame) Vera Laughton Mathews, who had served with the WRNS during World War I, was appointed Director. Admiralty Regulations for the WRNS were issued in August, and the first volunteers were called up in September. At this time 'Wrens' were drawn only from the main naval ports of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham and Rosyth, in an 'immobile' status which meant that they lived at home and were not liable to be called away from base areas. A basic weekly wage of 31s.3d. was offered for general duties Wrens, rising to 44s.9d. for a specialised Chief Wren, these sums including 1s.3d. weekly 'kit upkeep allowance'.

Initial employment categories were limited to specialised or general duties, the former encompassing office, motor transport and cooks' branches, and the latter such duties as steward, messenger, orderly and storekeeper. The nature of WRNS employment soon led to a voluntary 'mobile' status allowing Wrens to work anywhere required; this status eventually became mandatory and all new recruits were admitted to this category. By 1945 Wrens were working in over 90 rating and 50 officer categories, including many technical trades in the Fleet Air Arm such as air and radio mechanics. The term 'auxiliary' was not applied to the WRNS, as from the outset they were an integral part of the Royal Navy; however, WRNS officers were not entitled to a salute.

The first WRNS medical officer, Medical Superintendent Dr G.Rewcastle, wore the standard four blue rank stripes on red backing. The position was later transferred to that of 'naval surgeon', at which point she became a Surgeon Lieutenant, RNVR, wearing WRNS uniform with red-backed RNVR gold rank lace and gold-wreathed RN officer's cap badge. All future female medical

WRNS Ranks

WRNS	*RN equivalent*
Wren	Ordinary Seaman
Leading Wren	Leading Seaman
Petty Officer Wren	Petty Officer
Chief PO Wren	Chief Petty Officer
Cadet (OTC)	Midshipman
Third Officer	Sub-Lieutenant
Second Officer	Lieutenant
First Officer	Lieutenant-Commander
Chief Officer	Commander
Superintendent	Captain
Commandant	Commodore
Chief Commandant (Director)	Rear Admiral

OPPOSITE **ATS piper wearing pleated tartan skirt. In 1944 HM the King authorised the wear of Hunting Stewart tartan by the nine ATS pipers serving in the corps band; tartan skirts were also authorised for wear by all ranks serving with infantry depots of Scottish Command, as an optional item purchased at individual expense for wear when off duty or when otherwise authorised.**

The ATS started off with one bugle section, but this grew into a 52-piece 'five in one' band able to parade as a military, drum and bugle, pipe or dance band or a string orchestra. (IWM H15534)

OPPOSITE BELOW **With the exception of the post-August 1942 cap this boat crew 'Wren' is entirely kitted out in men's clothing: canvas deck shoes, bell-bottom trousers and 'white front' top. Wrens' rate and trade badges were of the same design as those worn by male ratings and senior rates, but in a distinctive bright blue.**

WRNS ratings were employed to man craft such as tenders, liberty boats and coastal hydrographic survey craft, though at peak strength these boat crews numbered only 573 out of a WRNS total of 74,620 women. The size of the service and the wide range of duties undertaken freed sufficient men to crew 150 destroyers or 50 battleships. (IWM A24949)

officers were recruited directly into the RNVR and were not members of the WRNS.

Material on WRNS uniforms will be found in the captions to accompanying photographs and to Plate A.

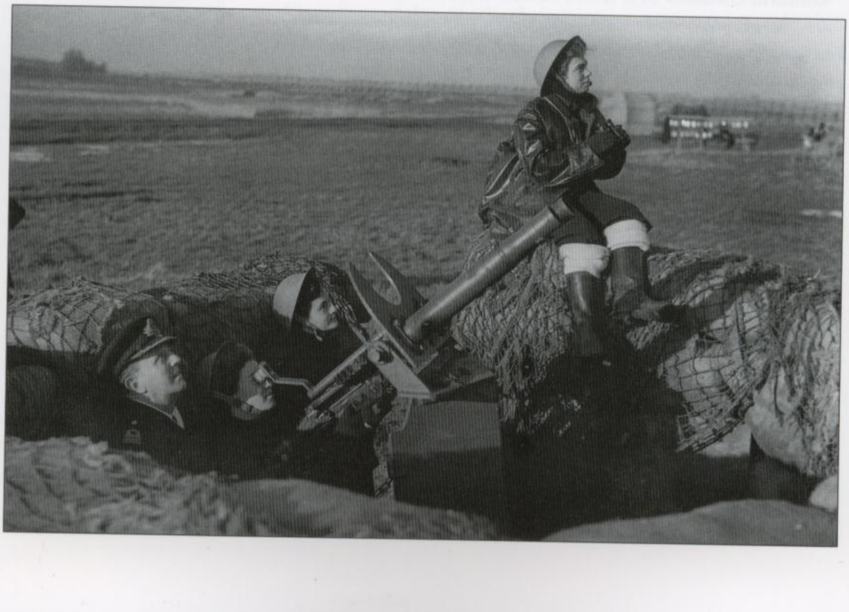
Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF)

The ATS was originally formed to provide auxiliaries for the Army and the RAF, and by mid-1939 2,000 ATS ranks were 'on strength' with the RAF in 48 companies. A new uniform of RAF blue tunic, skirt and cap had been authorised for the RAF companies in March, but only a few officers at the RAF training school had obtained them before the formation of the WAAF in June 1939. The bulk of the new service was formed by former members of the RAF companies who transferred from the ATS to the WAAF. On 1 July the first Director WAAF was appointed: Air Commandant Trefusis Forbes had served in the Women's Volunteer Reserve during World War I and had been appointed to No.20 RAF ATS Company prior to the formation of the WAAF.

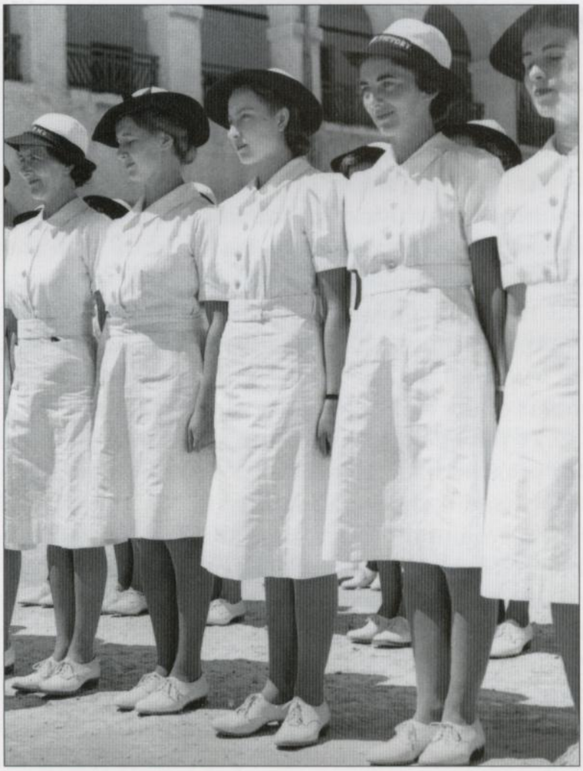
The WAAF were mobilised on 1 September 1939 with the first posting of 'Waafs' to RAF stations. Organisation at this time was somewhat *ad hoc*, but in December the first regulations for uniforms, ranks and discipline were published in Air Ministry Order A550/39. In April 1942 the first conscripts were called up under the National Service Act. By the end of hostilities the 182,000 women in WAAF service constituted a massive 22 per cent of RAF strength in Great Britain and 16 per cent of total RAF strength world wide. Airwomen served in 22 officer categories and 75 trades, from the plotting tables and radar screens of the home defences to stores and parachute packing sheds, from reconnaissance photo laboratories to MT pools, from cookhouses to barrage balloon sites.

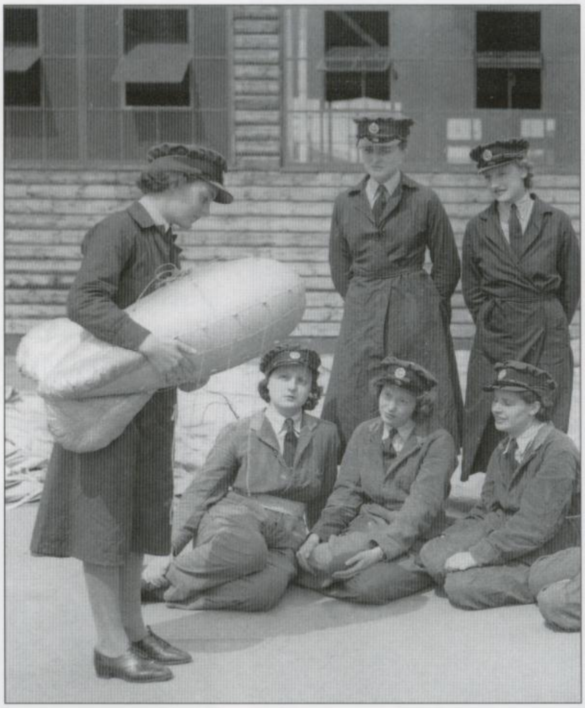
Among the decorations awarded to members of the WAAF were three George Crosses (the gallantry award second only to the Victoria Cross), six Military Medals, 1,489 Mentions in Despatches and two Commendations for Brave Conduct.

Material on WAAF uniforms will be found in the captions to the photographs and to Plate C.



RIGHT **Wrens man a .303in twin Lewis AA mounting under the watchful eye of an RN commander; steel helmets, sea boots and oilskins complement the working dress of blue shirt, serge tunic and bell-bottoms. Officially women in the British auxiliary services did not man weapons; however, although this is an obviously posed shot, there is evidence to indicate that Wrens in isolated Naval Air Stations (where they often made up a considerable proportion of the complement) were called upon to provide AA defence. (IWM A21881)**





ABOVE **A new batch of Wrens are inspected shortly after their arrival at a naval establishment somewhere in the Mediterranean theatre. By the end of the war Wrens were serving in over 30 overseas establishments, including those in Washington, Cape Town, Nairobi, Kilindi, Alexandria, and Basra. The first group to proceed overseas were the 21 sent to Singapore in early 1941; they were safely evacuated a few weeks before the city fell to the Japanese. Similarly, the Wrens stationed in Alexandria were hastily evacuated to Ismailia in summer 1942 as Rommel's *Afrikakorps* advanced into Egypt.**

Uniform consists of a white cotton tropical dress with four-button front and waist belt, white canvas shoes, and the soft-top, broad-brimmed hat with white cover. The latter was replaced in August 1942 by a soft-top blue wool sailor-type cap similar to that worn by male ratings, the tropical version having a white cotton top. The white cotton dress was very prone to creasing and tended to look scruffy; it was augmented in 1942 by a two-piece tropical work uniform of white cotton skirt and tailored blouse.

The WRNS rating's tropical kit issue was 3 cotton dresses, 6 tropical blouses, 6 skirts, 2 pairs canvas shoes, 2 pairs stockings, 4 pairs ankle socks, 1 tropical hat with three covers, and 2 tropical overalls (blue working dress). (IWM A9000)

BOTTOM RIGHT **WAAF balloon fabric repairers under instruction. They wear a mix of the early war Overalls, Workers, WAAF, with wrap-over front (background), as also used by the WRNS and ATS in navy blue and khaki respectively; and male issue one-piece blue overalls (foreground), both worn with blue shirt, black necktie and WAAF cap. The wrap-over overalls were later replaced in all three services by a dress-type overall with button front and hip pockets, although the designation of the garment remained unchanged – see Plate C3. (IWM CH174)**

OPPOSITE **In April 1941, 20 balloon fabric workers were the first Waafs to be trained as barrage balloon operators. It was found that despite the heavy nature of the work 14 WAAFs could replace nine men, and by the end of 1942, 15,700 women were serving in this role. Service dress being unsuitable for heavy physical tasks, early units were issued poorly fitting male Suits, Aircrew – the RAF equivalent of Battledress – as worn here in July 1941; by later that year these were being replaced with the similar Suits, Working, Serge, WAAF. Normal headgear was a black beret with brass RAF badge, worn pulled back on the head.**

WAAF Ranks

Pre-January 1940	*Post-January 1940*	*RAF equivalent*
Aircraftwoman 2nd Class	(unchanged)	Aircraftman 2nd Class
Aircraftwoman 1st Class	(unchanged)	Aircraftman 1st Class
(no rank authorised)	Leading Aircraftwoman	Leading Aircraftman
Assistant Section Leader	Corporal	Corporal
Section Leader	Sergeant	Sergeant
Senior Leader	Flight Sergeant	Flight Sergeant
(no rank authorised)	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer
Company Assistant	Asst.Section Officer	Pilot Officer
Deputy Coy.Commander	Section Officer	Flying Officer
Company Commander	Flight Officer	Flight Lieutenant
Senior Commandant	Squadron Officer	Squadron Leader
Chief Commandant	Wing Officer	Wing Commander
Controller	Group Officer	Group Captain
Senior Controller	Air Commandant	Air Commodore
(no rank authorised)	Air Chief Commandant*	Air Vice-Marshal

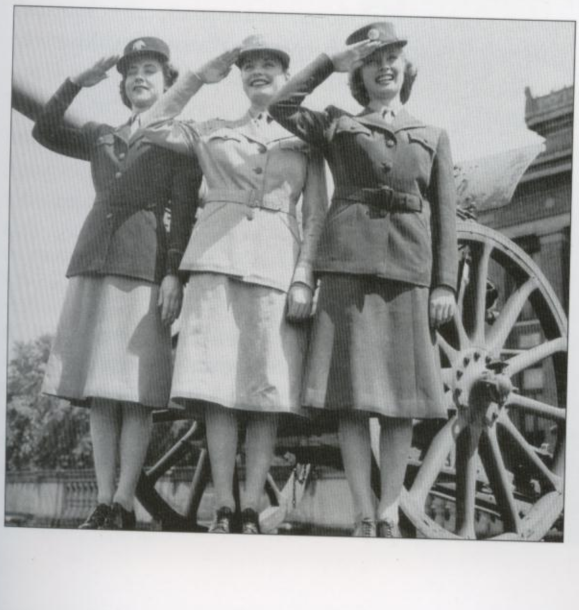
*This rank was instituted on 1 January 1943 with the appointment of Air Chief Commandant Trefusis Forbes. HRH The Duchess of Gloucester was gazetted to this rank on 22 March 1943, relieving ACC Trefusis Forbes as Director WAAF on 4 October 1943.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

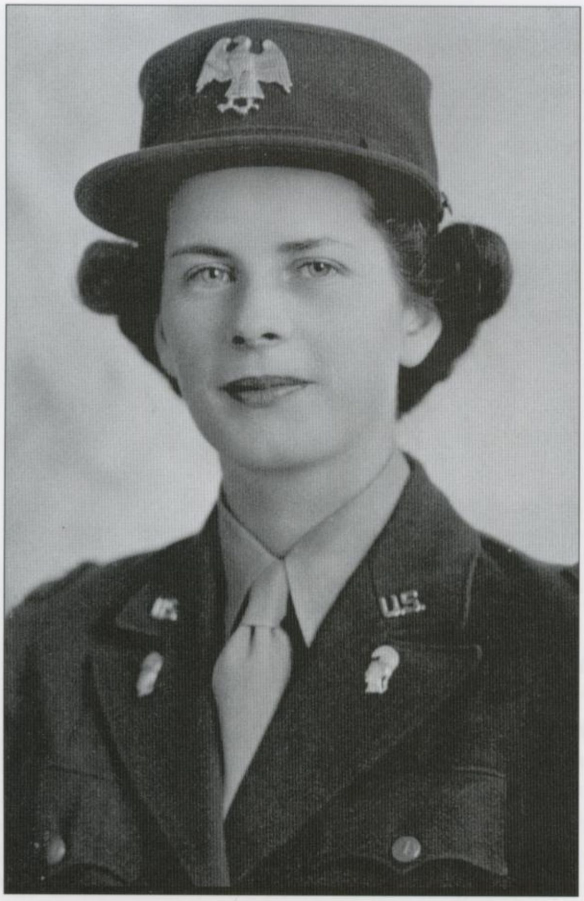
Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)
Women's Army Corps (WAC)

The bill introduced to Congress on 14 May 1941 advocating the formation of a women's auxiliary force to assist the US Army in non-combatant roles did not receive an easy passage; even the Army Chief-of-Staff, Gen.George C.Marshall, met considerable resistance to the idea of women joining the armed forces. The war in Europe meant that far more pressing legislation was being considered, and it was some time before it was finally enacted into law – by a majority of only 11 votes. Following extensive hearings the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps came into being on 14 May 1942, five months after America had entered the war. Its employment would soon increase dramatically, however, and on 1 July 1943 Congress enacted legislation which officially embodied the corps as a part of the US armed forces; henceforward it became the Women's Army Corps.

The guidelines for WAAC recruitment targeted the educated middle classes; this restrictive approach resulted in early figures showing that 90 per cent of WAAC intake were college graduates. The standards were later relaxed to encourage recruitment. In order to qualify provisionally all applicants had to submit proof of US citizenship and of an age between 21 and 44; to be of excellent character, providing two character references from professional or business people who were not relatives; to pass a mental alertness test, and a rigorous physical examination. Married women could join provided that they had no financial dependants; if they had



BELOW **Washington DC, May 1942: uniforms for the new Women's Army Auxiliary Corps are unveiled. (Left to right): officer's winter uniform in 'chocolate and pink'; officer's khaki summer uniform; and auxiliary's OD winter uniform. At this time uniforms were provided with a fabric waistbelt; and the enlisted winter uniform was a two-tone set with darker OD jacket and lighter OD skirt. In October 1942 waist belts were discontinued, and the enlisted winter skirt was ordered made up in the same OD shade as the jacket. Officers retained the 'chocolate and pink' combination.**



WAAC 2nd Officer wearing the officer's wool uniform with the 'Hobby hat'; a less affectionate term was 'monkey hat'. The WAAC eagle officer's badge, commonly referred to as the 'walking duck' or 'walking buzzard' due to its lopsided appearance, was worn until July 1943 when the WAAC was raised from auxiliary to full military status. Note the WAAC eagle plastic buttons, Pallas Athene lapel badges, and (just visible) the early 'fore and aft' shoulder straps, later replaced with standard epaulettes.

children under the age of 14 they had to prove that these would not be deprived of maternal care should their mother enter the service.

Although the British ATS were consulted both before and after the formation of the WAAC, it was still envisaged as a non-combatant force with only limited roles; little notice was taken of the lessons learned the hard way by the ATS over three years of war. As first planned, the WAAC were to provide little more than clerical assistance; but despite this lack of foresight an increasing number of specialist trades became available as the war progressed, many of them unthinkable for women before the outbreak of hostilities. By the end of 1943 'Wacs' were engaged in over 155 specific jobs (rising to over 240 by the end of the war) including, among others, the areas of medical, personnel, scientific, photographic, clerical, linguistic, cryptographic, drafting, radio and other communications, transport, mechanical, textile, catering and supply services. Many of these employment categories required some form of previous experience, ranging from former employment in that role to engineering degrees in the case of radio technicians. Basic military training initially lasted six weeks, later dropping to five weeks; the Wac was then posted for duty, or underwent additional specialised training which might last anything between six weeks for the Motor Transport School and 12 weeks for photographic technicians.

Many women's organisations had sprung up all over the USA during the pre- and early war years, most being little more than ladies' clubs with self-designed uniforms and rank structures which generally bore little resemblance to those of the armed forces. The WAAC's recognised position was reflected in the design of their uniforms, which in colour, cut and insignia resembled those of their male counterparts; but under the National Defense Acts their auxiliary status prevented them from wearing distinctive items of military uniform as used by the regular

OPPOSITE **Winter 1942–43: the first detachment of Waacs prepare to leave an east coast port en route for North Africa, where they were to be attached to the staff of Lt.Gen. Eisenhower. Director Hobby returns the salute of Leader (Sgt) Ann Bradley. Hobby wears the officer's overcoat; the enlisted women, the early Coat, WAAC, Utility, Member, and rubber boots over service shoes. WAAC typists and telephone operators were urgently requested for North African service shortly after the 'Torch' landings; all were volunteers, and were woefully aware of the limitations of their auxiliary status. A WAAC officer's or auxiliary's pay could be as much as 50 per cent lower than that of an equivalent male soldier even though she was replacing a man in similar employment and grade. In theory if not always in practice, a pay equalisation bill passed by Congress on 26 October 1942 did away with these anomalies.**

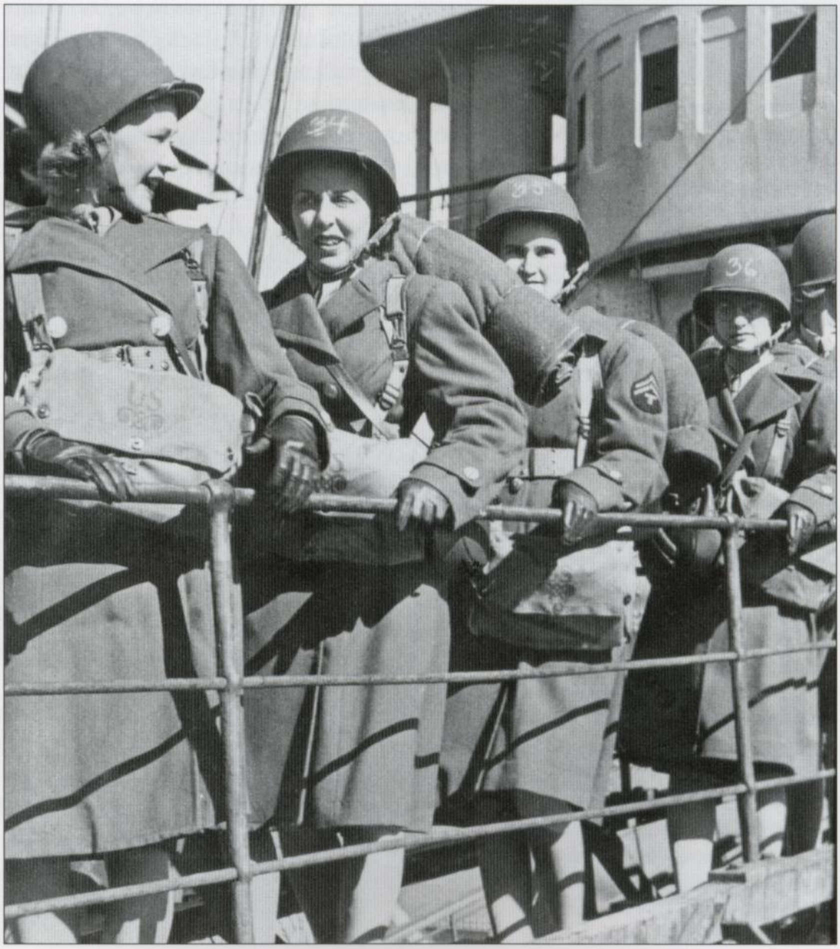
forces. In May 1942 the protection of the National Defense Act was extended to include the uniform of the WAAC.

The initial intake of the WAAC for 1942 had been set at 13,000, with a strength of up to 180,000 anticipated by the end of 1943. The actual strength for 1943 only reached 61,403, with 70,000 by April 1944 and an all-time peak of 99,288 in April 1945. Even this rate of increase in cumulative strength, and the expansion of women's roles, placed a great burden on the resources of the Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG). The woollen service dress originally considered as the sole uniform requirement was impractical for the variety of tasks eventually undertaken. This led to the issue of various items of workwear, including herringbone-twill (HBT) fatigues.

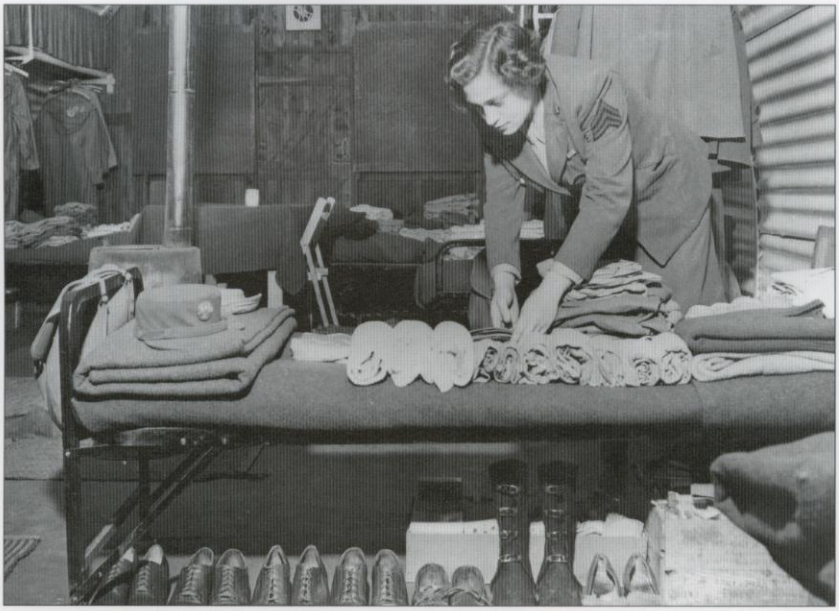
Development of WAAC/WAC uniforms

The practical problems inseparable from the development of a new military uniform by a series of committees and interested parties are perhaps worth considering at some length through the example of the US WAAC; similar horrors generally attended the evolution of uniforms in other nations.

The adoption of Army colours and 12oz wool covert for the winter service uniform was approved on 11 March 1942. The actual



January 1944: a contingent of Wacs land in a North African port. All wear the M1 helmet and Overcoat, WAC, Enlisted Women. WAC utility bags, M1936 'musette' packs, M1936 pistol belts and lightweight service respirators are carried by all ranks. Much use was made of such images of US women serving overseas, to show the public that the WAC were doing their bit for the war effort wherever they were needed.



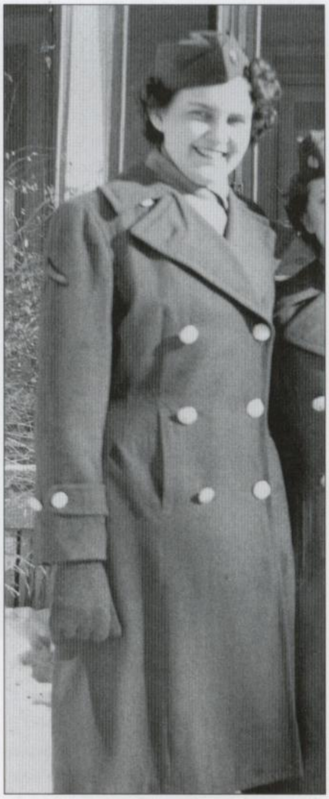
A WAC sergeant lays out her uniform and equipment ready for inspection. Identifiable items include no fewer than seven items of footwear including arctic overshoes, service shoes, and non-regulation fluffy-trimmed slippers. The M1936 musette bag is strapped to the foot of the bedstead; service cap with WAAC eagle device, summer hat and M1941 'Beanie' cap are visible on the folded blanket. The absence of the WAAC tab below the sleeve rank chevrons, and the WAAC eagle still worn on the cap, suggest a date just post-July 1943 when auxiliary status was dropped. This NCO has already replaced the OD plastic WAAC eagle tunic buttons with US Army brass buttons – not officially authorised until mid-1944. Between July 1943 and April 1944 an OD plastic button bearing the US coat of arms was produced for newly manufactured garments, replacing 'old eagle' stocks as they became depleted. (US National Archives)

development of the tunic was somewhat confused. For example, the original design had a belt; in March 1942 this was deleted; in April, re-adopted, and then deleted again within the same month; and May saw the re-introduction of the belt on the tunic pattern accepted for production. The first procurement of this pattern of jacket was made in June 1942, but the design was short-lived; that October the belt was again deleted, and was absent from all future procurements of WAAC tunics. The pedantry and indecision over such a small item indicates the lack of co-ordination in the approach to WAAC clothing at this stage. Continuous minor changes were made to the design throughout the war.

Skirt-culottes and slacks had originally been considered, but at the insistence of Director Oveta Culp Hobby the idea was dropped in favour of a simple skirt of six-gore pattern with straight 'A' lines; this led to some problems in fitting, particularly over the hips where a rounded design would have been more practical. Where possible minor improvements were made to the design to allow for a smarter appearance and better fit, but in essence the skirt remained unchanged. It had been intended to adopt a two-tone effect in the WAAC enlisted winter uniform, the skirt being of a lighter OD shade than the tunic as was the case with US Army tunics and trousers. This was soon overruled in favour of a matching skirt and tunic, despite the difficulties in obtaining a perfect colour match due to differences in batches of fabric used by various manufacturers.

It was realised quite early in the programme that a handbag of some type was essential for women. The adopted bag was originally worn on the left side with the strap across the body and supported on the right shoulder. WAAC regulations of June 1943 changed this, prescribing that the bag should still be worn on the left but with the strap over the left shoulder. The strap now tended to slip, and to prevent this a small anti-slip pad was designed to attach to the strap. On 8 November 1943, before the pad had gone into production, new regulations re-adopted the previous method of wear.

Director Hobby played an important role in the development of WAAC clothing; her suggestions formed the basis of design for the majority of items, none more so than the WAAC cap. Following Director Hobby's guidelines the cap was to be stiff, visored, and suitable for both officers and enlisted personnel. On 13 May 1942 a cap submitted by Knox Hats was accepted for adoption; this soon acquired the nickname 'Hobby hat', and became the subject of many unfavourable comments. It was difficult to clean and re-block, and without careful packing was easily crushed. It was also less comfortable than the garrison cap then in use by the Army. This prompted a request, in early 1943, for a WAAC garrison cap; but at this time the continued use of the garrison cap by the Army was in doubt. It was not until April 1944 that the manufacture and issue of a WAC garrison cap was officially approved, and then only as an addition to the 'Hobby', which was to be retained for formal wear. WAC personnel had been acquiring and wearing male-pattern garrison caps since 1943; however, despite the introduction of the WAC garrison cap in 1944, many did not receive it before the end of the war in Europe and continued to wear the male pattern. By early 1945 the 'Hobby hat' had fallen into disuse and had been replaced, for wear on all occasions, by a garrison cap.



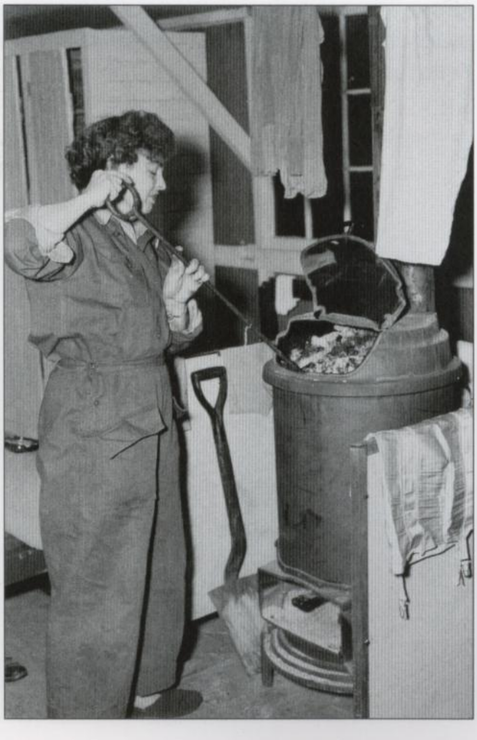
Overcoat, WAC, Enlisted Women, with a double row of four regulation buttons, convertible collar, and a rear box pleat held by a two-button half-belt. This PFC wears the male garrison cap with WAC Pallas Athene lapel insignia correctly pinned to the left front; some photos show it worn on the right.

Field uniform

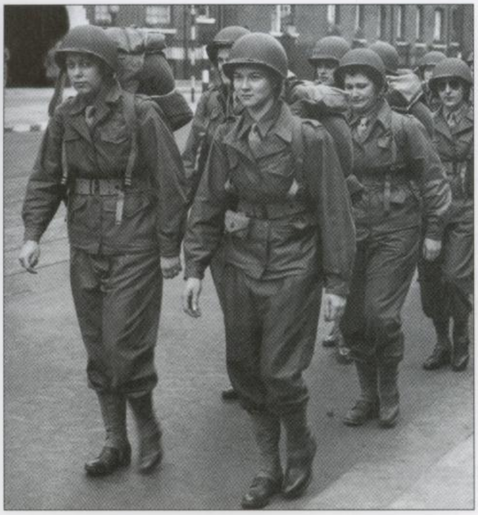
By the beginning of 1943 Waacs were serving in the North African theatre of operations, on operational airbases, and in many other locations where a field uniform was a necessity. At first men's field jackets and wool trousers had been issued. However, as the ATS had discovered, male clothing was unsuited to the female figure and a purpose-made uniform was needed.

The Office of the Quartermaster General had already been experimenting with the layering principle. The basis of this is that if air is held still against the body by several layers of thin clothing, heat retention is considerably greater than with a single garment of equal thickness. The items envisaged as providing the greatest benefit were wool vest, underpants, socks, shirt, trousers, sweater, pile jacket liner and liner trousers, windproof outer jacket and trousers. When these were worn in combination and with the addition of e.g. a wool knit cap, gloves and scarf, body temperature could be regulated by the addition or removal of individual layers, thus providing a multi-season uniform suited to a wide range of conditions.

This research was put to good use in the development of a field uniform for the WAC. The outer cover trousers which were to become a part of the new uniform were issued well before the introduction of a jacket; a wind- and water-repellent 9oz OD cotton sateen overtrouser was standardised on 26 June 1943. During the development stages pile liner trousers were found to be too bulky and were replaced in 1943 by a 20oz wool liner. These



Shirt, Herringbone Twill, Women's, Special (worn over a cotton 'waist') and matching Trousers, Herringbone Twill, Women's, Special, worn by this Wac stoking a barrack stove. Note the distinctive slanted pockets and hip buttons. This two-piece HBT suit replaced an earlier one-piece HBT coverall which had been issued to MT personnel and those engaged in outdoor work. Drying out around the stove are several pairs of 'GI nylons' and a WAC girdle.



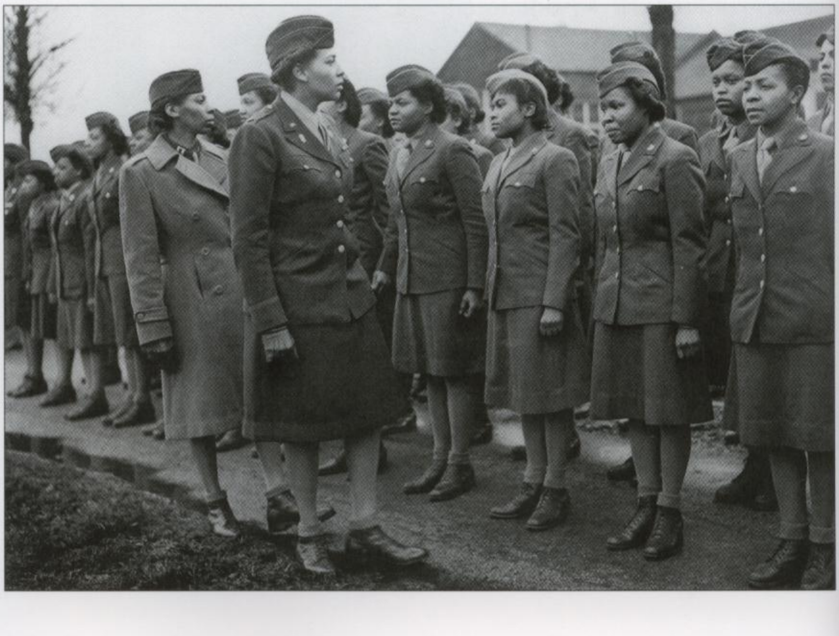
A detachment of US Wacs march through an English town, presenting a very military appearance and lacking only firearms. Uniform is the standard US M1 helmet, the Jacket, Field, M1943, Women's, and Trousers, Women's, Outer Cover (see Plate F2). They carry M1928 packs with blanket roll and M1936 pistol belt. WAC personnel proceeding overseas were a priority for issue of the M1943 OD field uniform, receiving the new outfit before many male units had got their equivalent version.

By September 1944, 5,425 WACs were serving in Europe, of whom 310 were officers. Peak strength in the ETO was 8,316 in July 1945; a year later this figure had dropped to 1,476. (IWM PL57044)

trousers were initially worn with the Coat, WAAC, Utility, Member (a long, showerproof trenchcoat, later replaced by the Overcoat, Field, Women's); the men's OD Field Jacket ('Parsons jacket'), officially issued only to nurses; and, following its introduction, small sizes of the men's M1943 field jacket.

The development of a woman's field jacket started in autumn 1942, and the eventual design, closely based on that of the men's M1943 version, was standardised at the end of 1943 as the Jacket, Field, M1943, Women's. The original liner was also a copy of the Jacket, Field, Pile but likewise fastening on the woman's side. This was found to be too bulky and poorly sized, tending to be tight on the hips when fitted correctly elsewhere (a problem that could have been avoided had the jacket not been a direct copy of a man's item); it was replaced by a 20oz wool flannel jacket standardised on 30 August 1944.

While the OQMG had a great deal of experience in providing clothing for the Army, this did not extend to the particular problems associated with the female figure. This led to the issue of only Long, Regular and Short variations of each standard size – wholly inadequate for the variations in women's bust and hip sizes. On the civilian market there was no definite standardisation of sizes that could be drawn upon, manufacturers tending to establish their own norms. The OQMG eventually gathered a pool of personnel with the necessary experience of

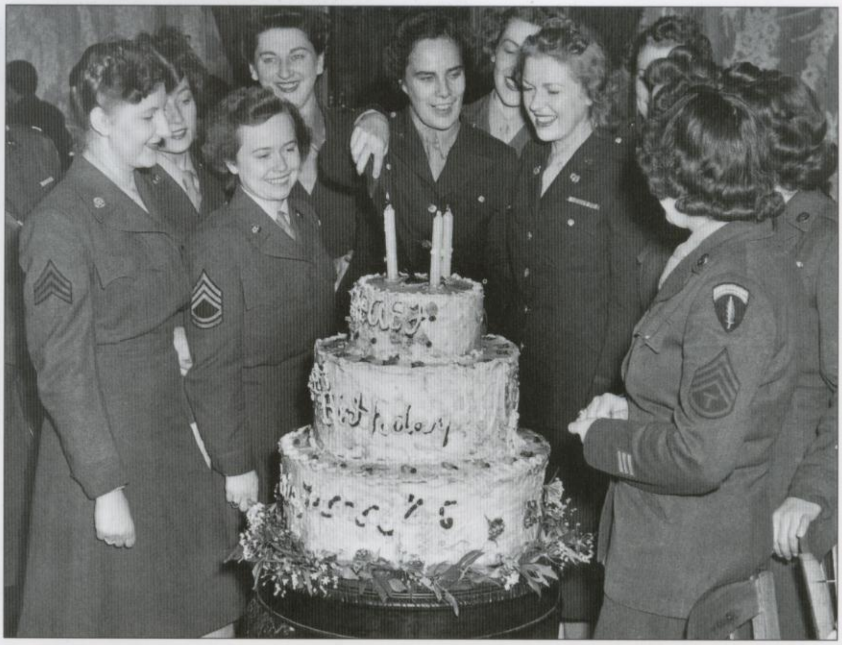


England, winter 1945: a detachment of 'colored' Wacs are inspected by their officers. Racial segregation was standard policy in the US forces, and further discrimination limited the number of trades open to non-whites. At peak numbers 4,040 African-American women served in the WAC, representing only 4.5 per cent of total WAC strength. These WACs wear winter service dress as approved in March 1942; here it is worn with the piped Cap, Garrison, Wool, WAC, which by 1945 had officially replaced the old 'Hobby hat' for wear on all occasions. The leading officer wears the Jacket, Wool, OD, Women's, Officers', the second the Overcoat, Wool, Women's, Officers'. (US National Archives)

WAAC Ranks, 1942-43

WAAC Officers:	*US Army equivalent*
Director	Colonel
Asst.Dir.	Lt.Col.
Field Dir.	Major
1st Officer	Captain
2nd Offr.	1st Lt.
3rd Offr.	2nd Lt.
Auxiliaries:	
1st Leader	Master Sergeant
Tech.Ldr.	Tech.Sgt.
Staff Ldr.	Staff Sgt.
Leader	Sergeant
Junior Ldr.	Corporal
Aux. 1st Class	PFC
Auxiliary	Private

Note: After integration in July 1943 the WAC adopted Army ranks.



A WAC birthday celebration in the ETO in 1945. Winter service dress predominates, with the officer and the warrant officer (to the right of the cake, with medal ribbons) in dark 'chocolate' OD wool uniforms. The two NCOs to the left of the cake wear the recently introduced 'battle' or 'Ike' jacket. Requests for such an item had originally been declined, but by the winter of 1944 Wacs in the ETO were wearing blouses made and procured in Britain. This caused some argument between theatre commanders, the WAC and the OQMG. Eventually its wear was authorised by the personnel division of the War Department General Staff; but by early 1945 only the Army Nurse Corps had approved a design, and none had actually been procured by the QMG before VE-Day. Approval for the wearing of the Jacket, Field, Wool, Women's before a design had been agreed led to a variety of patterns being purchased by officers in the ETO and USA, while enlisted women in the ETO continued to acquire the locally authorised British-made pattern. Later they were also manufactured in France, and many bore the labels of prestigious Paris tailors. (IWM FRA203532)

the women's clothing industry, but it was not until the beginning of 1945 that a Women's Clothing Section was eventually established in its own right.

Insignia

Regulations originally prevented WAAC use of the US Army's eagle coat of arms cap device, Army buttons or arm of service collar insignia. The Army heraldic section produced a distinctive eagle design which was accepted by WAAC HQ and adopted for both cap and buttons. This slightly lopsided bird (see Plate F4) was worn by officers on the 'Hobby hat'; auxiliaries wore it smaller, superimposed on a backing disc. The redesignation of the WAAC as the WAC in July 1943 led to a review of the cap badge; it was decided that as stocks of WAAC badges became exhausted they should be replaced by the regulation Army devices. During the change-over period there was some overlapping of the styles.

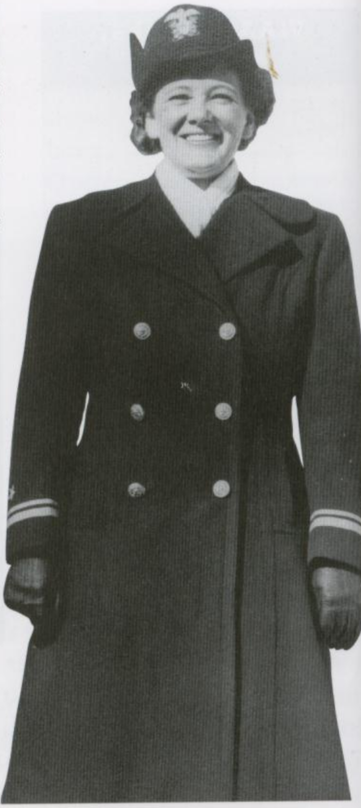
Due to the need to conserve metal it was decided in March 1942 that WAAC buttons would be made from OD plastic; the WAAC eagle design was eventually adopted for the uniform buttons of all ranks. Redesignation as the WAC led to adoption of the US coat of arms design, initially in OD plastic; in April 1944 these were authorised replaced in brass, which was no longer in critical supply – though many individuals had anticipated the order for the sake of smartness. WAAC/WAC buttons were all produced in the regulation 25 ligne (⅝in), 36 ligne (⁹⁄₁₀in), and 45 ligne (1 ⅛in) sizes.

At the time of the corps' formation a collar insignia was suggested by Col.L.O.Grice, Chief of the Supply Division Standardisation Branch – the helmeted head of the Greek goddess Pallas Athene, which was approved by WAAC HQ on 10 May 1942. (She has a dual character: Pallas, goddess of storms and battle, and Athene, goddess of peace and human wisdom.) The WAAC collar insignia was worn by both officers and – superimposed on a disc – by auxiliaries.

After some debate the regular Army style of rank chevrons were adopted. Some form of device was required to distinguish the auxiliaries from regular Army NCOs; WAAC NCOs were therefore ordered to wear a 'tab' beneath any chevrons – a 6cm × 2cm strip of 'old gold' (pale yellow) cloth with the letters 'WAAC' embroidered in moss green. The tab was approved by WAAC HQ on 4 August 1942; the corps colours of old gold and moss green had already been approved on 25 March. The tab was not worn after July 1943 brought WAC NCOs equal status with their male counterparts.

By the end of the war in Europe most of the insignia unique to the WAC had ceased to be worn, the only general exception being the 'old gold' and green cap piping. The Pallas Athene collar device was in limited use, having been widely superseded by the Army branch of service insignia of the units to which the Wacs were attached. They were entitled to wear all AOS insignia except those of Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, Coast Artillery, Armored and Tank Destroyer branches; Wacs attached to such units continued to wear the Pallas Athene.

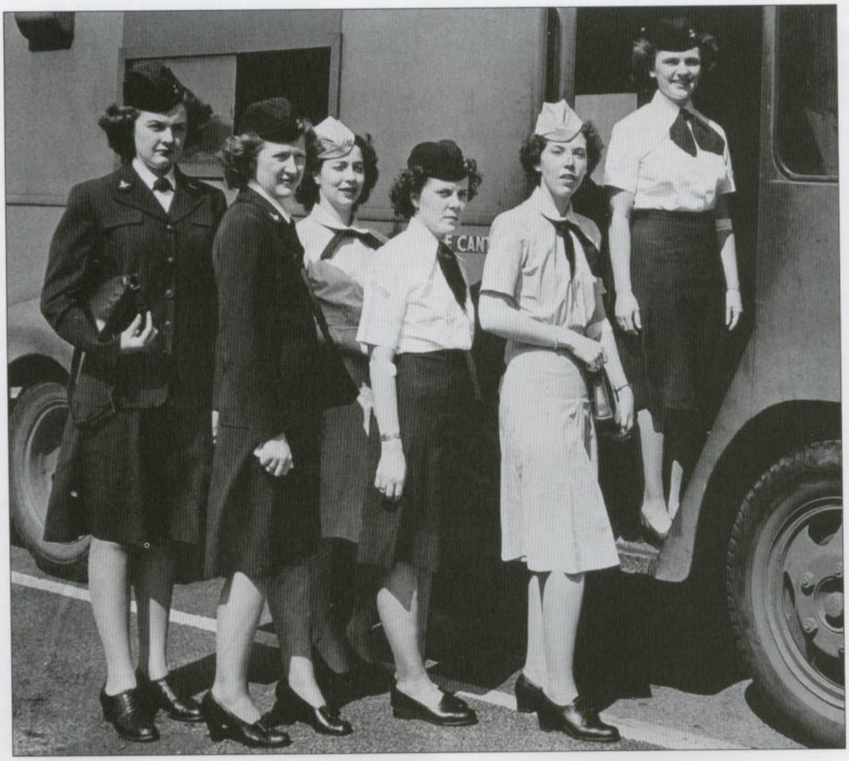
Among the many awards made to members of the WAC during the war were ten of the Soldier's Medal, which marked heroic service at the risk of life.



ABOVE **Lieutenant Junior Grade wearing the WAVES' smart winter overcoat with gilt buttons and blue cuff lace. The officer's cap was black for winter and white-topped for summer; it bears the standard USN silver and gilt officer's eagle and anchors badge. The uniform is finished off with a white silk dress scarf and black leather gloves.**

Women's Reserve of the United States Naval Reserve (WAVES)

The WAVES were established by act of Congress in May 1942; the title came from 'Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service'. Enlistees between 20 and 36 years old were sworn to serve only in the continental USA for the duration of the war, to be discharged within six

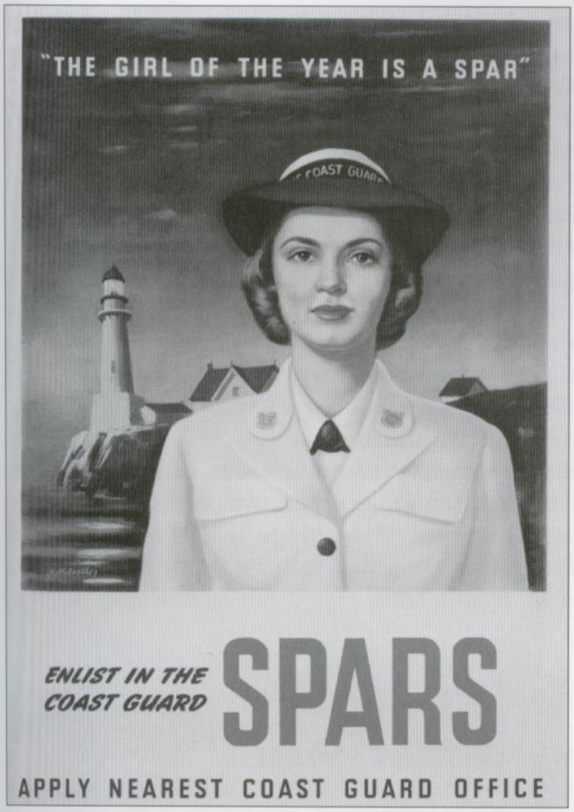


LEFT **May 1945: enlisted 'Waves' queuing at an American Red Cross mobile blood donor centre show the variety of uniform that could be worn within even a small group – blue service uniform, seersucker summer dress (see Plate G2), and shirtsleeve order with service skirt. By this stage of the war the old style hat with ribbon had been replaced by the blue or seersucker garrison cap. Upon joining the service 'Waves' and 'Spars' were given an allowance of $200 for clothing; $160 was deducted for items issued, the $40 balance being for shoes and underwear.**

months of the end of hostilities. Initially they were not allowed to be married to a member of the US Navy, although there were no regulations prohibiting marriage to a member of any other service, including the Coast Guard. These rules were later relaxed, but the prohibition on the wives of USN officers enlisting remained in force. 'Waves' were subject to naval regulations, and ranks of pay were as for the US Navy.

College graduates could enlist as officer candidates with the rank of Apprentice Seaman; once commissioned they wore a uniform identical to that of enlisted Waves with the exception of the hat, gilt buttons and blue cuff lace to the tunic, and white shirt for dress wear (enlisted ranks wore a 'reserve blue' shirt for dress use). The maximum age limit for officer candidates was 49 years.

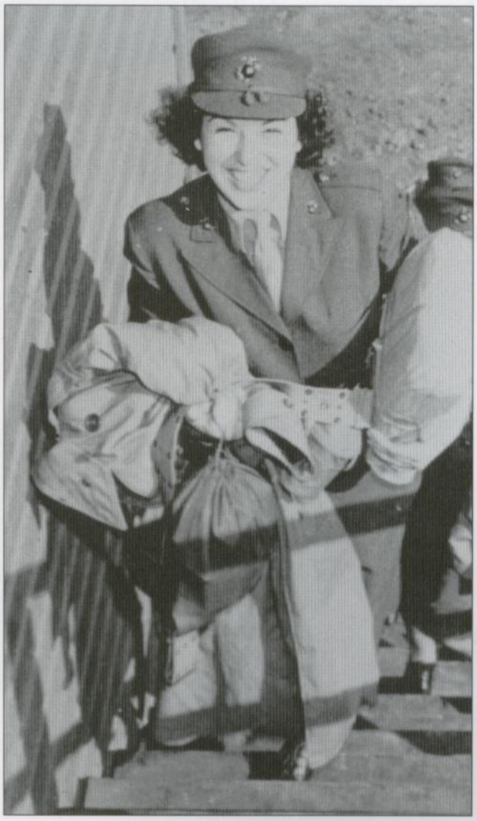
By the spring of 1944, 63,000 Waves were in service with the US Navy. For notes on uniforms, see captions to the accompanying photos and to Plate G2.


"THE GIRL OF THE YEAR IS A SPAR"
COAST GUARD
ENLIST IN THE COAST GUARD
SPARS
APPLY NEAREST COAST GUARD OFFICE

Recruiting poster by L.W.Bentley for the US Coast Guard Women's Reserve, 1943. Note the cut of the collar and lapels – this was the same on the blue service tunic of the US Navy's WAVES. (The Women's Memorial, Washington DC)

Women's Reserve of the United States Coast Guard (SPARS)

The US Coast Guard was one of the nation's fighting forces, and the oldest in the United States; the title 'SPARS' was coined from the USCG motto, *Semper Paratus* ('Always Ready'). The Spars, founded by act of Congress in November 1942, were closely allied to the Waves in all aspects of organisation, training, dress and employment. They provided support for the US Coast Guard in shore establishments and bases. Uniforms were identical to those of the Waves but enlisted rates wore a 'US COAST GUARD' cap ribbon and officers wore the USCG cap device. All ranks wore Coast Guard buttons on the uniform with the crossed anchor device on the lapels and the shield on the sleeve. As with the Waves, Spars did not serve afloat with the



A USMC Women's Reserve sergeant climbs the steps to her 'topside' barracks. She wears forest-green Uniform, Winter Service, WR, with matching cap bearing red cords and 'EGA' device; amongst her kit she carries an M1936 pistol belt and an issue 'field' (trench) coat. The USMCWR were proud of their Marine heritage and were readily accepted into the Corps by all but the most die-hard 'Gunnies'. (See also Plate G1).

fleet. It was originally anticipated that 8,000 Spars would be needed for active duty by mid-1944, but by the spring of 1944 over 12,000 women were in service. The SPARS were finally demobilised on 30 June 1946.

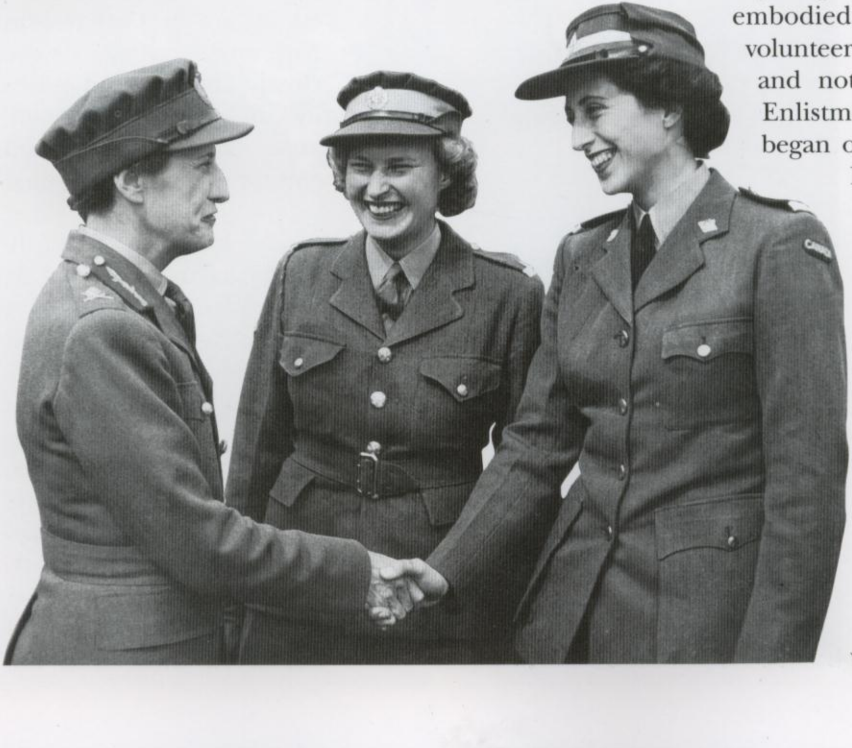
United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve (USMCWR)

The WRs (Women's Reserves) were established in 1943; they were an integral part of the United States Marine Corps and proudly upheld the traditions of the Corps. Initial training took place at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Commissions could be obtained directly but the majority of officers were promoted from the ranks. WRs received the same pay and benefits as male ranks with the exception of the 'dependants allowance'. The basic minimum WR uniform consisted of the following items: two winter uniforms, one winter cap, one trench coat, six khaki shirts, six khaki ties, four summer uniforms, one summer hat, one handbag, one summer handbag cover, two pairs of gloves (one winter, one summer) and four pairs of stockings. By 1944 WR numbers had reached 22,000. They performed many duties, some similar to the WAAF in that they involved supporting Marine air squadrons.

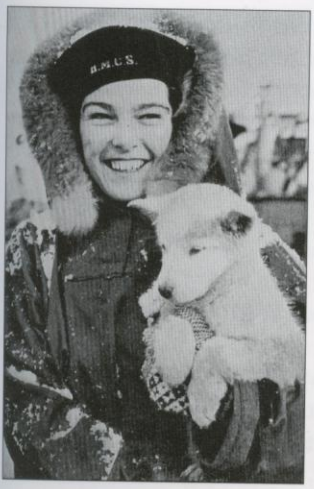
CANADA

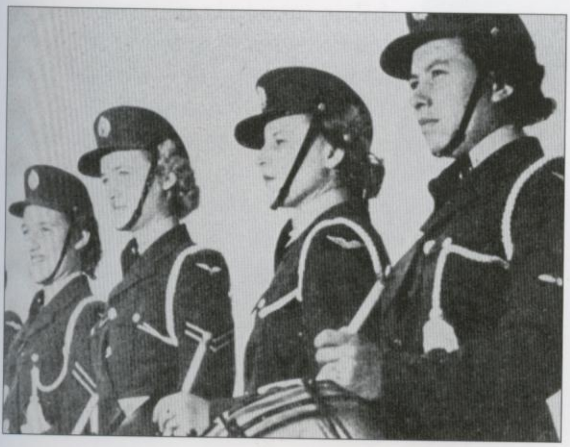
Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC)

Following the outbreak of war Canadian women's volunteer organisations flourished. The Canadian Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps ('Beavers'), British Columbia Women's Service Corps and the 'Canadian ATS' were but a few of these unofficial units. Despite the willingness of Canadian women and the ever increasing need for manpower it was not until 13 August 1941 that the Canadian Women's Army Corps officially came into existence. It embodied many of the former volunteer units but was still auxiliary to, and not part of, the armed forces. Enlistment into the new service began on 1 September 1941 and, on 1 March 1942, the CWAC became a corps on the establishment of the Active Militia of Canada. The insignia was initially that of the Canadian Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps with a beaver cap badge, and maple leaves and miniature beavers used instead of pips and crowns for officer ranking. Army rank badges were adopted following incorporation into the regular forces in 1942, as was Army rank. Prior to this



Chief Controller Lesley Whateley, Director ATS 1943–46 (left), greeting an ATS and a CWAC officer cadet at No.2 ATS Officer Cadet Training Unit. The ATS cadet wears the austerity version of the 1941 pattern tunic, and second pattern cap with stiff peak and leather chin strap. The Canadian cadet wears standard Canadian winter SD uniform with its distinctive single breast pocket, and the equally distinctive CWAC cap. Both cadets wear the officer cadet distinction of a white cap band.





TOP **A Canadian Wren cuddles a husky pup, one of three kept as mascots by an anti-submarine flotilla of the RCN. She wears the second pattern cap which had replaced the earlier wide-brimmed hat, with 'HMCS' cap tally. The padded cold weather jacket with fur hood trim was RCN rather than WRCNS issue.**

ABOVE **'Wid' drummers of the RCAFWD band wear winter service dress with second pattern caps; the first type had been a copy of the British WAAF cap but with a cloth peak. The badge was the standard RCAF wreath and crown. A similar uniform but in khaki drill was worn during the summer months, retaining the wool cap.**

officer rank structure had followed that of the ATS, with NCOs being the same as in the regular Army and privates being termed 'volunteers'. The CWAC cap insignia consisted of three maple leaves on a diamond, bordered by the words 'Canadian Women's Army Corps'. Cwacs were enrolled for the duration of the war plus one year; they received two-thirds of men's pay, a figure that was eventually raised to four-fifths.

Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS)

Three senior WRNS officers arrived in Canada in May 1942 to assist the Canadian government in the organisation of the WRCNS. Following a recruiting tour of the country the first class of 68 Wrens began training in August; twelve months later over 3,000 had been trained and were serving with the Royal Canadian Navy. WRCNS personnel were members of the RCN and, as such, came under King's Regulations, Admiralty Instructions and RCN Orders for discipline and conduct. Officers were commissioned with ranks the same as for the WRNS until June 1943, after which time RCN ranks were adopted. Pay was four-fifths that of equivalent RCN male ranks.

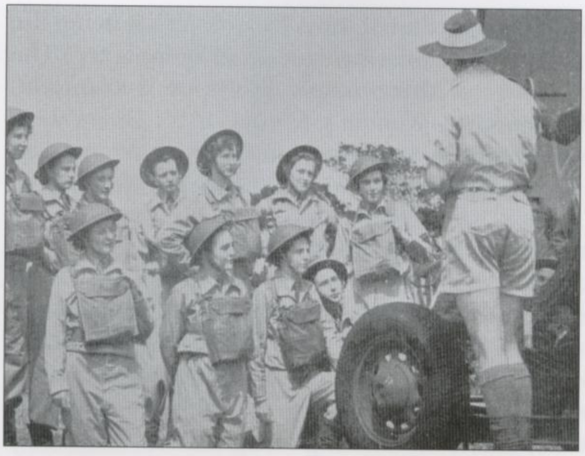
Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (CWAAF)

The CWAAF prided themselves on being the first women's service in North America to receive official recognition, being authorised by an Order in Council on 2 July 1941. The CWAAF was modelled very closely on the British WAAF, adopting similar uniform, ranks and structure but, unlike the WAAF, the CWAAF were a component part of the RCAF. On 3 February 1942 an Order in Council changed the designation of the CWAAF to the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division) – often abbreviated to WD – and in March of that year WD officers were accorded the same status as male officers including the entitlement to salutes. 'Wids' were the first Canadian women to proceed overseas; the first detachment arrived in England in September 1942 wearing the 'CANADA' shoulder titles which were only displayed by those serving outside Canada. Eventually 1,300 Wids were serving overseas, including 300 enlisted in Britain. WD pay was two-thirds male pay rising to four-fifths from 1 July 1943. The WD's motto 'That Men May Fly' justly summarised their role.

AUSTRALIA

Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS)

Recruiting for the AWAS began in January 1942, and with manning levels eventually reaching over 18,000 the AWAS was by far the largest of the Australian women's services. Employment was similar to the ATS but with a great emphasis on signals and AA defence. Uniform consisted of a smart khaki-green service dress with bronze buttons and the 'sunrise of bayonets' AIF insignia on the lapels. Full issue consisted of one winter SD



AWAS searchlight operators receive instruction from a 'Dig'. They wear tan cotton shirt and slacks with steel helmets and respirators. Within AA batteries some command posts were manned entirely by AWAS, with most AA roles being open to women with the exception of actually firing the guns.

uniform, one summer SD uniform, one cardigan, one greatcoat, one fur felt brimmed hat (smaller brim than the male bush hat and without the turn-up), three shirts with six collars, three pairs of shoes and three pairs of stockings. Underwear and sleeping wear were not provided, but an annual maintenance allowance was paid which allowed for these items.

Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS)

Mrs Florence Violet McKenzie had been the first Australian woman to graduate in electrical engineering; she later joined the Australian Women's Flying Club, becoming an instructor in Morse code. Mrs McKenzie was instrumental in forming the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps training civilian women in communications. Following the outbreak of war she offered the services of the WESC to the RAAF; since they were somewhat slow to take up the offer she then offered her trained ladies to the RAN. The RAN accepted 14 of the WESC signallers, forming the signals section of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) in April 1941. Initially recruited for home service, the Wrans' overseas employment was later authorised. The size of the service (less than 2,000) meant that it was some time before any commissions were authorised; by the end of the war only a few third officers had been appointed, having passed out from the officers' training school. Uniform was similar to that worn by the WRNS but had brass RAN buttons and a brimmed felt hat with a crowned anchor cap badge (as worn by petty officers) instead of the HMAS cap ribbon.

Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF)

Mrs McKenzie (see WRANS above) was appointed honorary Flight Officer in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force in May 1941. A couple of months earlier, on 15 March, one Beth Edmonston had enrolled with 17 others as the first entry into the new WAAAF, the first Australian women's auxiliary service. Unlike their male RAAF counterparts WAAAFs were not enlisted but enrolled, signing on for the duration of the war to serve within the limits of the Commonwealth of Australia, although volunteers served further afield in places such as New Guinea. Uniform was similar to that worn by the WAAF but in the distinctive RAAF dark blue, with the RAAF cap badge being worn by airwomen. Blue overalls, battledress and, in the summer months, khaki drill all formed part of the uniform with the distinctive broad-brimmed slouch hat or a black beret. Recruits were aged between 18 and 40 but specialists with particular qualifications could be accepted up to the age of 50.

SOUTH AFRICA

Women's Auxiliary Defence Corps (WADC)

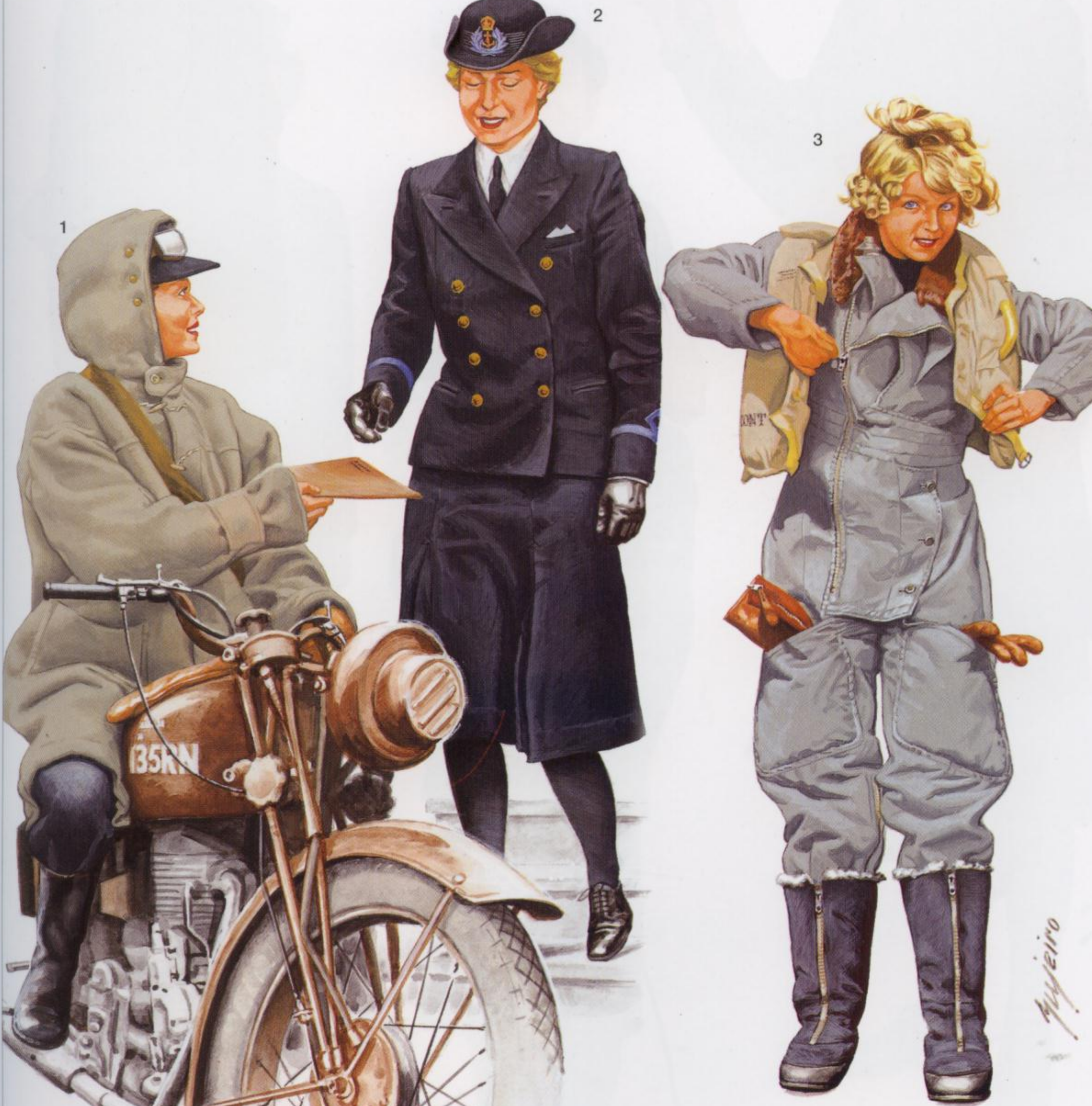
South African women's services all came under the framework of the Women's Auxiliary Defence Corps, the controlling body of the Women's

GREAT BRITAIN – WRNS

1: WRNS despatch rider; Portsmouth Naval Base, February 1941

2: WRNS Third Officer; UK, 1942

3: WRNS radio mechanic; HMS *Sparrowhawk*, May 1942



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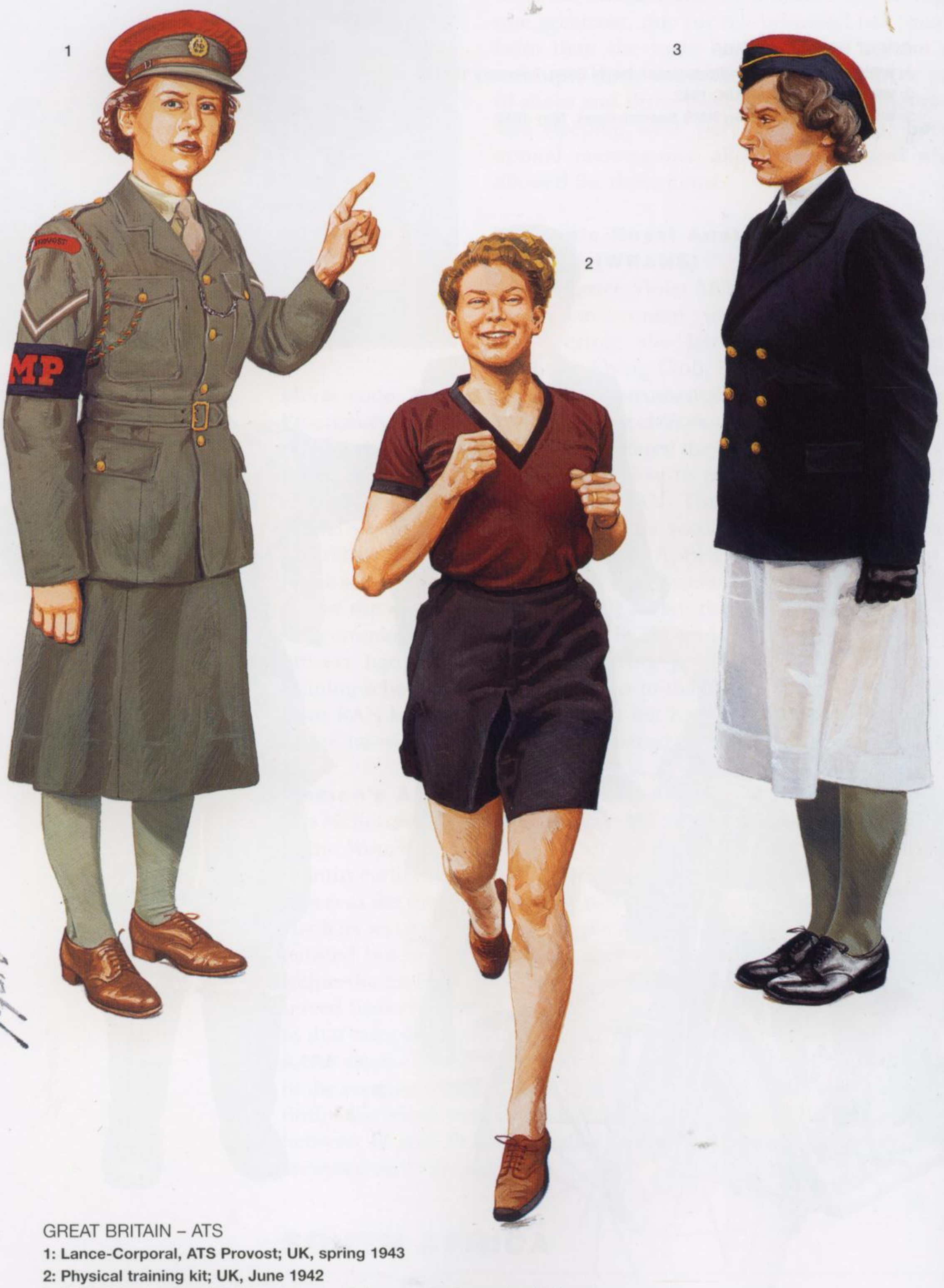


GREAT BRITAIN – ATS

1: Lance-Corporal, ATS Provost; UK, spring 1943

2: Physical training kit; UK, June 1942

3: Officer, Range Staff, Eastern Command; Sheerness, December 1940

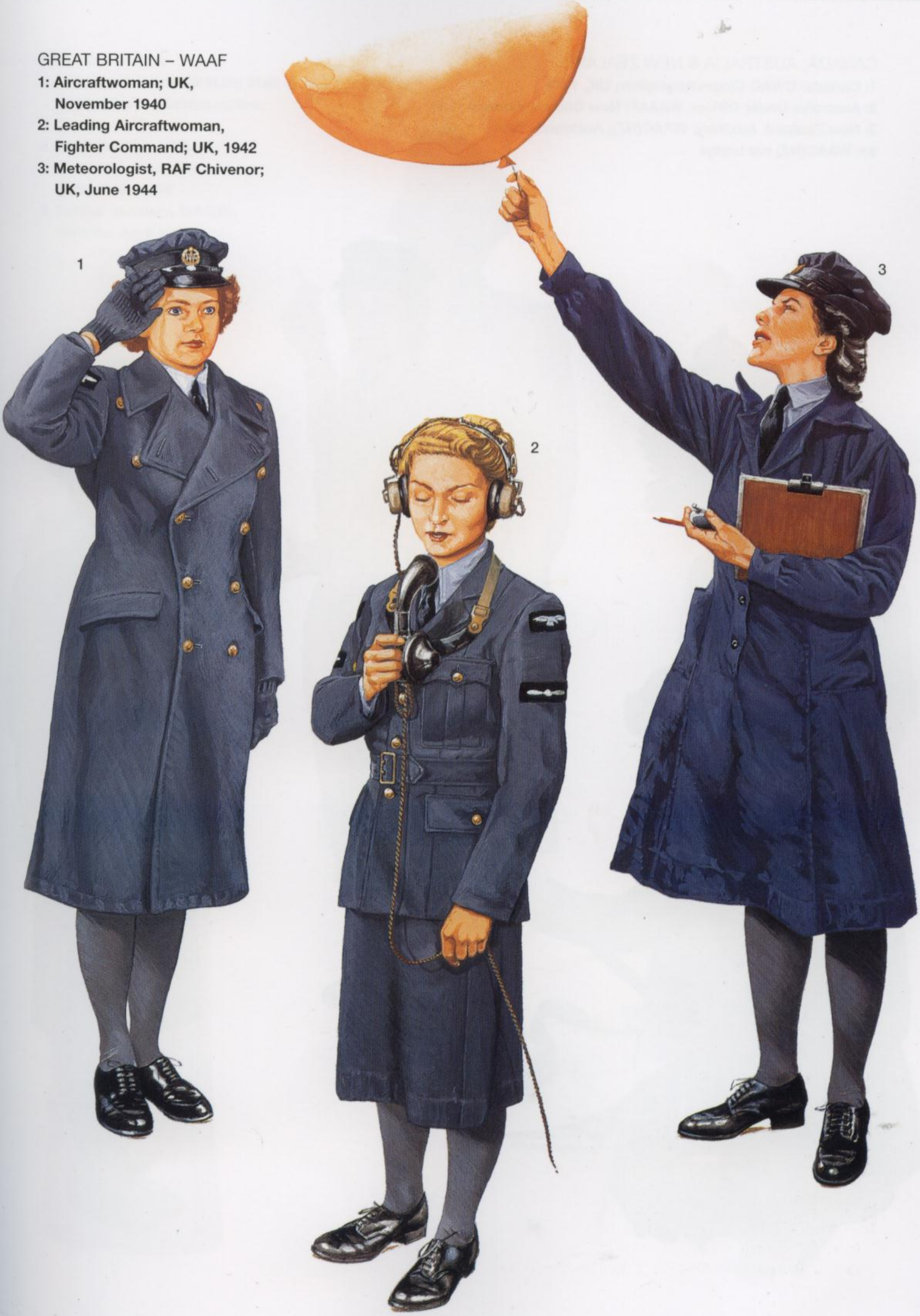
B

GREAT BRITAIN – WAAF

1: Aircraftwoman; UK, November 1940

2: Leading Aircraftwoman, Fighter Command; UK, 1942

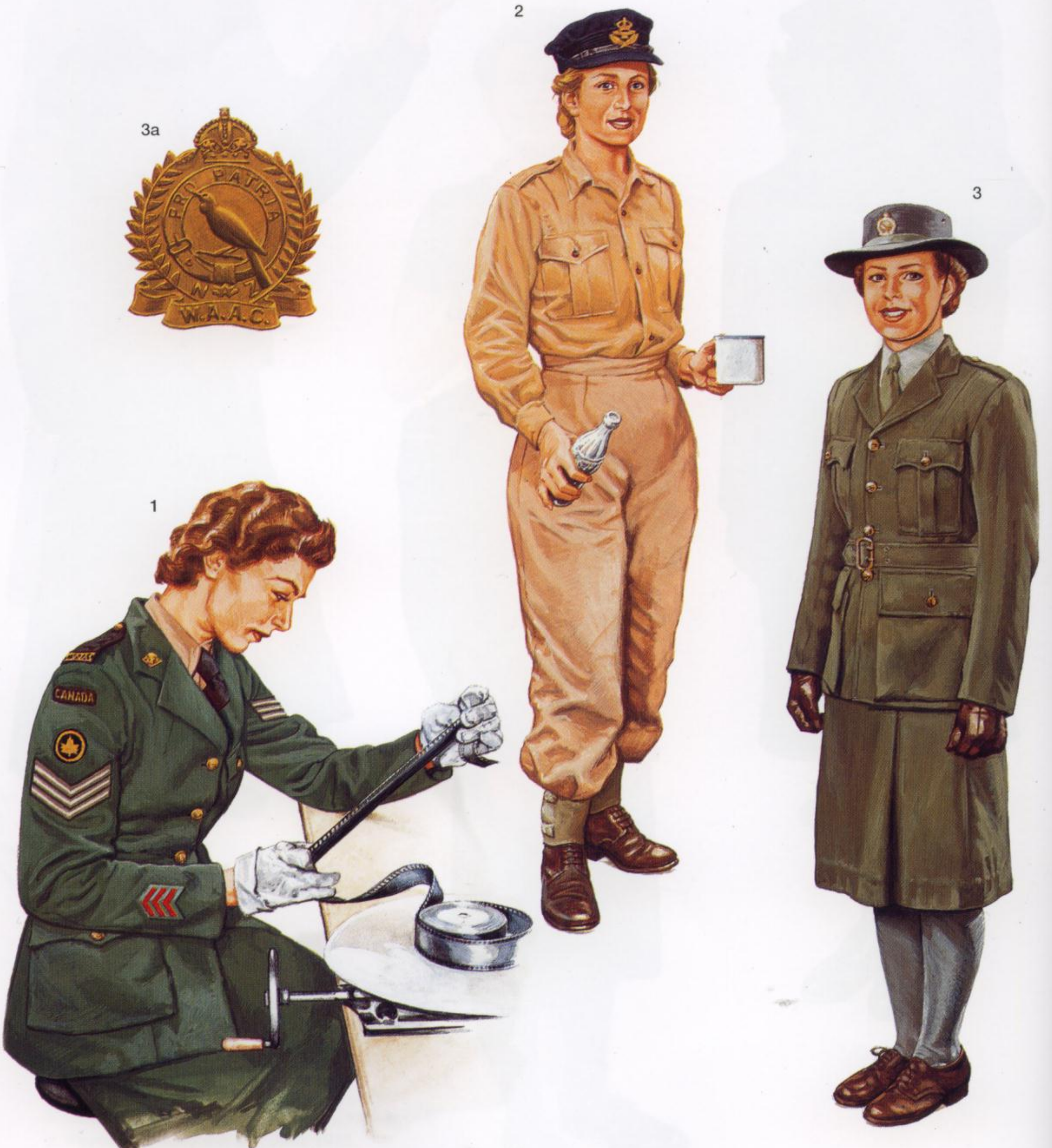
3: Meteorologist, RAF Chivenor; UK, June 1944



C

CANADA, AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

1: Canada: CWAC Cinematographer; UK, 1944
2: Australia: Under Officer, WAAAF; New Guinea, January 1944
3: New Zealand: Auxiliary, WAAC(NZ); Auckland, 1944
3a: WAAC(NZ) hat badge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CANADA

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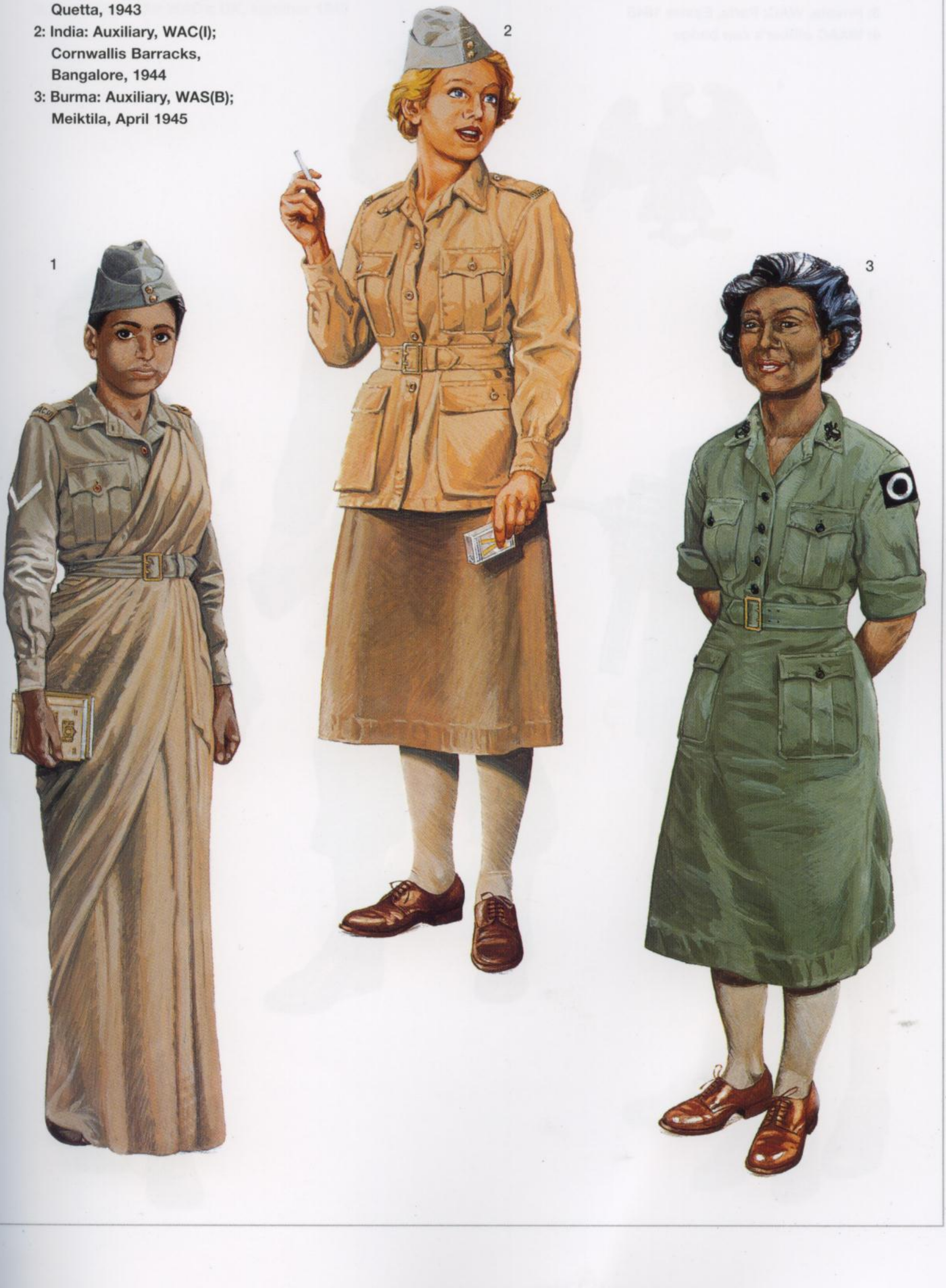
INDIA & BURMA

1: India: Lance-Naik, WAC(I); Staff of the Administrative Commandant; Quetta, 1943

2: India: Auxiliary, WAC(I); Cornwallis Barracks, Bangalore, 1944

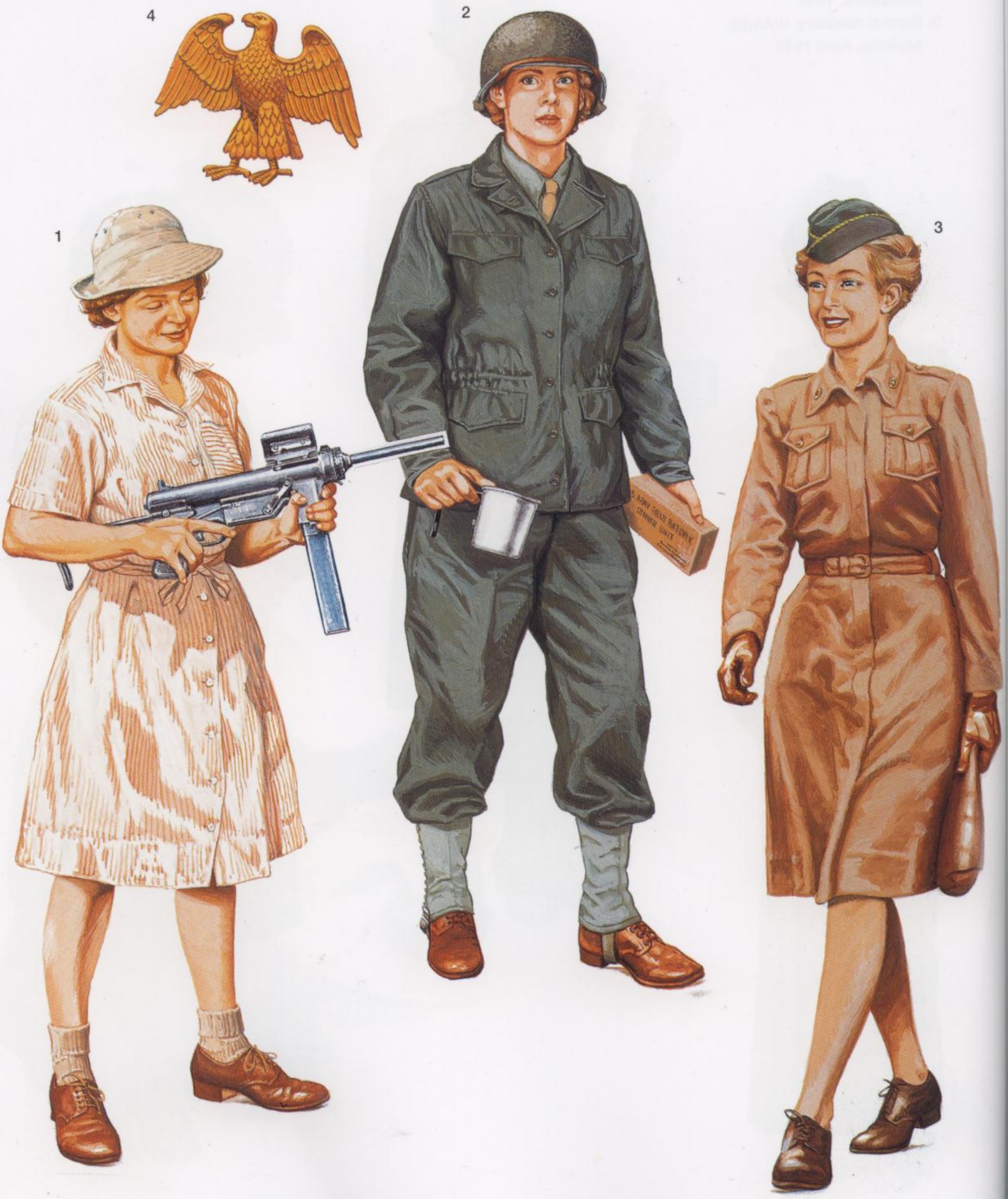
3: Burma: Auxiliary, WAS(B); Meiktila, April 1945



E

UNITED STATES

1: Weapons examiner, WAC; USA, 1944
2: Private, WAC; Normandy, July 1944
3: Private, WAC; Paris, Easter 1945
4: WAAC officer's cap badge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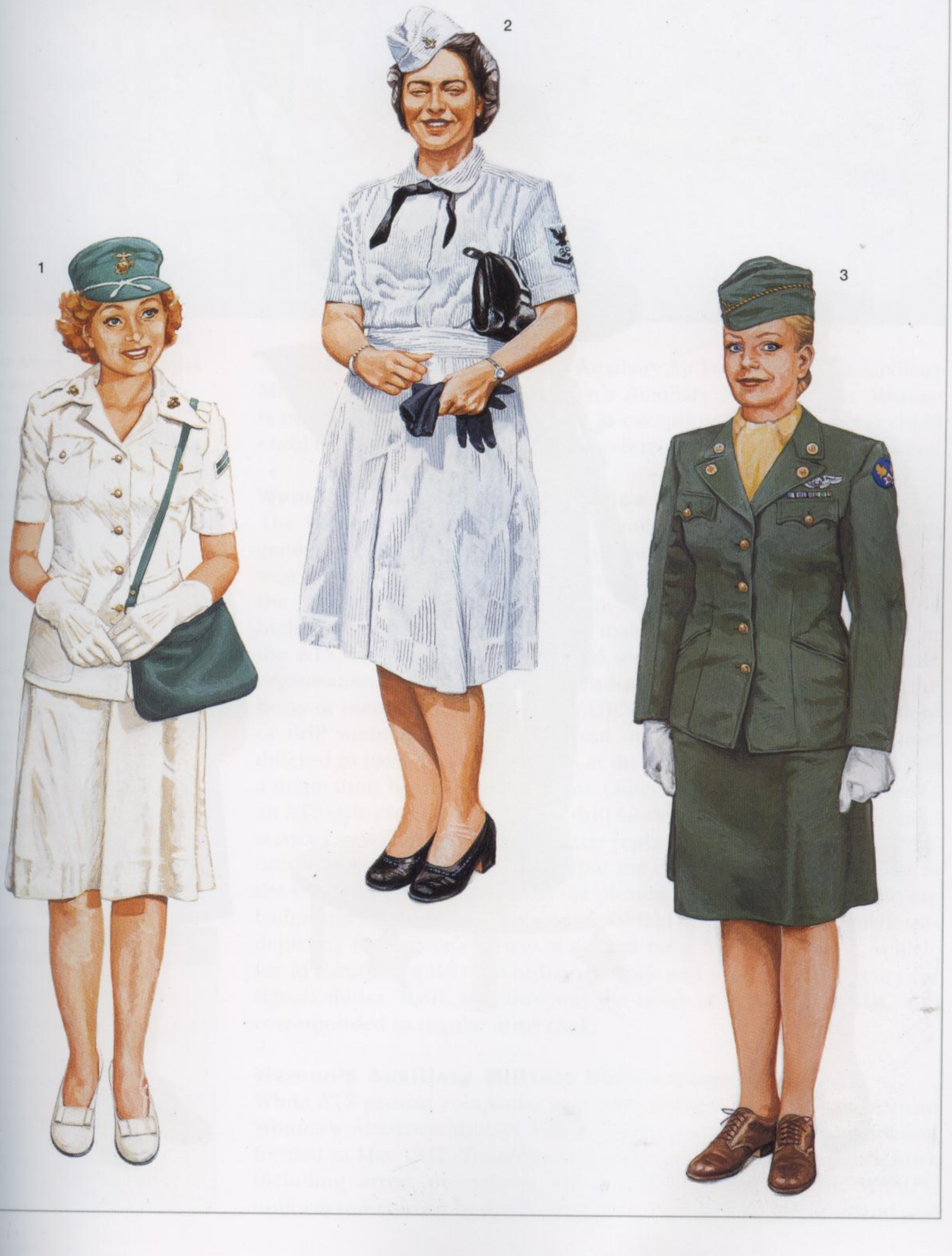
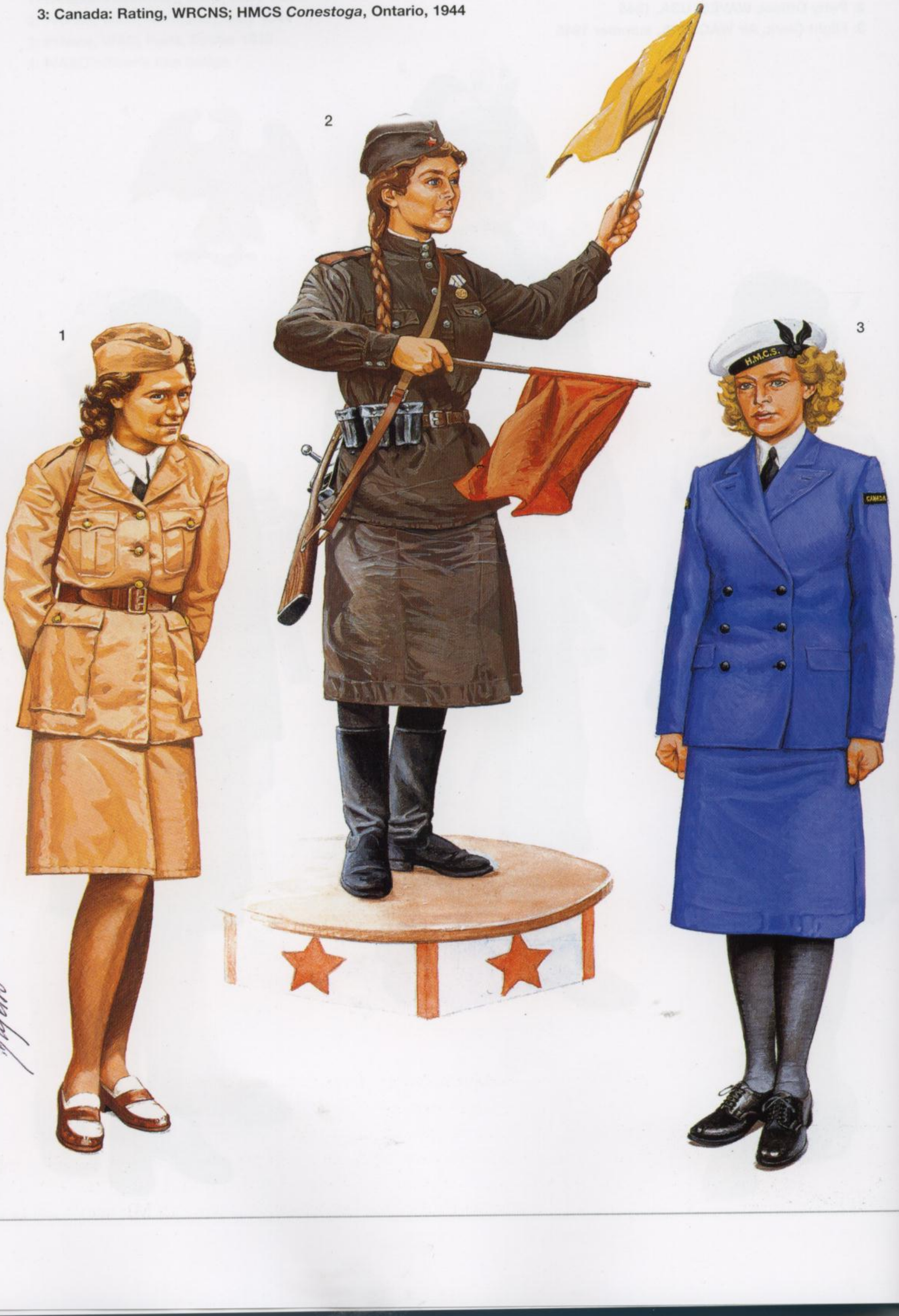
F

UNITED STATES

1: Corporal, USMCWR; Oahu, Hawaii, August 1945
2: Petty Officer, WAVES; USA, 1945
3: Flight Clerk, Air WACs; UK, summer 1945



1: France: Interpreter-secretary; Algiers, 1943
2: Soviet Union: Red Army traffic controller; Berlin, 1945
3: Canada: Rating, WRCNS; HMCS *Conestoga*, Ontario, 1944



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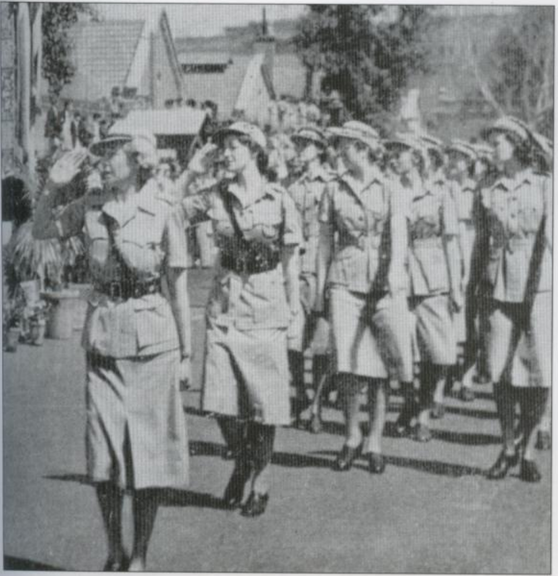
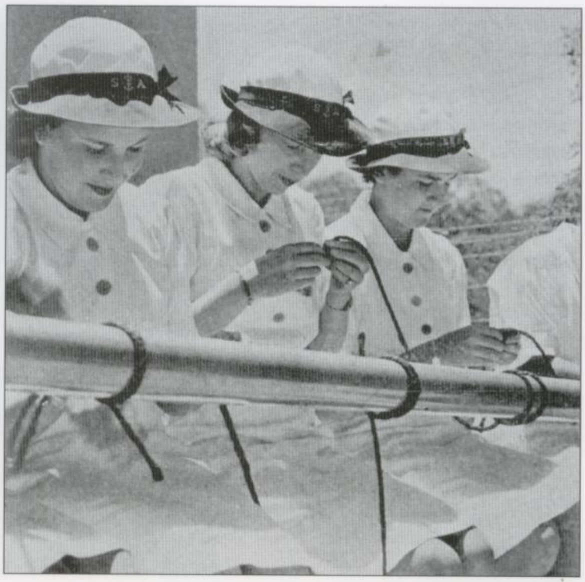




South African WAAS auxiliaries take part in an Empire Day parade in Cairo. All ranks wear summer weight cotton uniforms; unusually for women, the officers wear Sam Browne belts complete with cross strap. Officers' skirts had a central front pleat; their cap was an unpleated 'boxed' version of that worn by other ranks, the OR pattern being a copy of the ATS cap.

RIGHT 'Swans' of the South African Women's Auxiliary Naval Service learn ropework during their two-week basic training. The SANF never integrated the WANS to the degree achieved by other Commonwealth countries. Employment was initially limited to only two categories, the clerical and technical branches, although the communications branch was added later.

Auxiliary Army Service, Women's Auxiliary Air Force, Women's Auxiliary Military Police Corps and Women's Auxiliary Naval Service. Women between the ages of 18 and 41 (55 in exceptional circumstances) could enrol in the WADC, choosing their preferred service at the WADC depot.

Women's Auxiliary Army Service (WAAS)

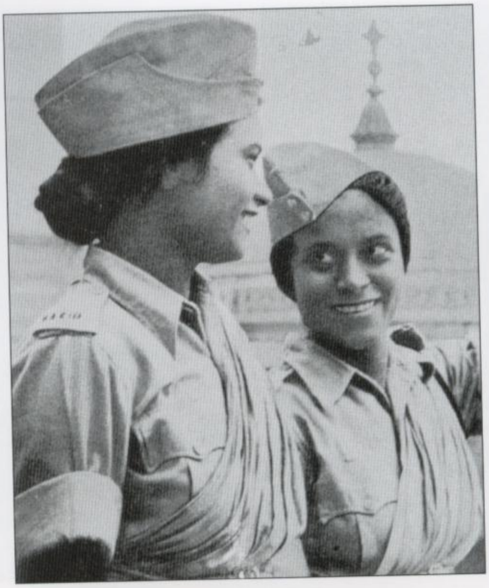
The WAAS was formed in 1939 on similar lines to the ATS. Although generally enlisted for service within the Union, certain trade groups were expected to serve anywhere on the African continent and, later, in the Middle East and Mediterranean. Standards were very high, with a higher degree of segregation from male units than was to be found in the ATS; the WAAS frequently had separate trade groups from male organisations which undertook identical work. Native labourers did the heavy or menial work. Standard WADC uniform consisted of khaki wool or drill summer service dress based on the ATS uniform. The tunic differed in having bellows pockets at the skirt and the uniform skirt had a single short box pleat at the front. Other ranks' headwear consisted of an ATS style cap in khaki wool or drill fabric for summer uniform; a field service cap was also used but was later replaced by a khaki beret. Officers' uniforms were as for other ranks but the cap had a plain top similar to the US 'Hobby hat' rather than the pleated top of the ATS cap. The cap badge and lapel badges consisted of a shield divided into four quadrants depicting the service's variety of roles; a book for clerical work, vehicle for MT duties, bullets for ordnance work and a figure of Mercury for signals duties. Rank structure was the same as for the SAWADC and corresponded to regular army rank.

Women's Auxiliary Military Police Corps (WAMPC)

While ATS provost companies were part of the ATS, the South African Women's Auxiliary Military Police Corps was a separate organisation formed in May 1942. Training covered all aspects of service police work including arrest procedures, pistol handling and ju-jitsu. WAMPC uniform was as worn by the WAAS/WADC but with an MP armband and

WADC Ranks

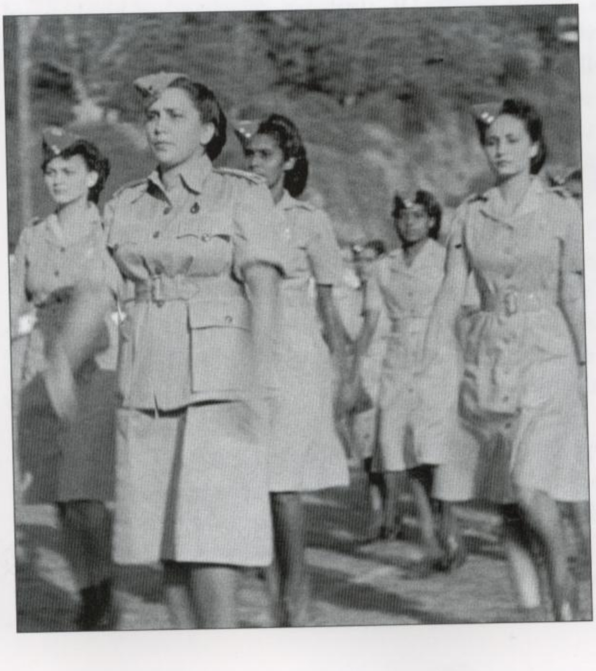
Private
Corporal
  or Air Corporal (SAWAAF)
Sergeant
  or Flight Sergeant (SAWAAF)
Staff Sergeant
Warrant Officer
2nd Lieutenant
Lieutenant
Captain
Major


Off-duty WAC(I) auxiliaries sightseeing in an Indian city. They wear khaki cotton shirts with 'WAC(I)' titles in black on khaki epaulette slides. The Indian KD version of the field service cap is worn without the WAC(I) cap badge, which was introduced only late in the war. Being Indian women they also wear the traditional *sari* with a KD waistbelt, an optional alternative to the KD tunic and skirt. (See also Plate E1.)

red-topped male pattern service dress cap bearing the Union Defence Force general service springbok cap badge.

Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF)

As early as December 1938 plans had been made to form an organisation to support the South African Air Force in time of emergency. The South African Women's Aviation Association trained volunteers in a variety of subjects, including aviation theory and mechanics, and enabled a number to obtain pilot's licences, including three who qualified for commercial pilot's licences. In September 1939 the SAWAA received official government recognition and was retitled the South African Women's Voluntar Auxiliary Air Unit, attached to the SAAF. The SAWVAAU motto was *Ad Manum* ('At hand'). In June 1940 the first 100 women were called up for service in the newly formed SAWAAF. One of the principal and founding members of the SAWAA, Major Doreen Hooper, assumed command of the SAWAAF at the age of only 23. The service developed rapidly, and Waafs were soon employed in a number of trades in such positions a disciplinarians, flight mechanics, armourers and meteorologists. The uniform was that of the WADC but with SAAF badges. Rank in the SAWAA was as for the WADC.


HQ South-East Asia Command, Kandy, Ceylon, 9 May 1945: auxiliaries of the Ceylon ATS march past during the VE-Day parade. The officer leading the detachment wears KD bush jacket and skirt; the other ranks all wear a khaki cotton one-piece dress with full length front opening secured with ten buttons and cloth belt, and khaki wool field service caps. (IWM SE2975)

South African Women's Auxiliary Naval Service (SAWANS)

Established in October 1943, the SAWANS wer the last of South Africa's women's services to b formed. Prior to this date 47 members of th WAAS had been loaned to the South Africa Naval Forces for admin duties. 'Swans' wer employed on limited duties, the two basic group being clerical and technical with communication being added later in the war. Recruits for th clerical branch received no specialised trad training; they were recruited into work in whic they were previously employed or qualified, suc as typing and office administration. The technic branch provided Swans to man specialised nav defence systems and required a four-week trainin period. Communications Swans were given 'o the job training' after having been posted t signals offices. As they qualified they replace male operators in coding, de-coding, distributio

Morse and telegraphy. All Swans underwent a two-week 'disciplinary class' which gave them a grounding in customs, drill and naval life. Although part of the WADC, the SAWANS adopted naval rank. Their uniform was of the same style as that worn by the British WRNS but with the SA cap ribbon (ratings) and 'South Africa' shoulder title.

INDIA

Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) (WAC(I))

The WAC(I) was formed in April 1942 with the aim of giving women of British and Indian nationality duties with the Army, of which they were an integral part with full military status. Entry was restricted to women between the ages of 17 and 50, but was open to any race, caste or creed, recruiting from British and Indian women living in British India or the Indian states. There was no segregation in the corps and Indian, British, Anglo-Burman, Anglo-Indian and others lived and worked together. However, given the restrictions of gender and caste in Indian society, in practice most volunteers came from the Anglo-Indian (mixed race) and Indian Christian communities. By 1945 the WAC(I) had some 1,160 officers and 8,900 other ranks, employed mostly in clerical, administrative, cipher and signals duties in rear areas. The WAC(I) was the only women's military service in India and provided personnel to serve with the air force and navy, the latter being renamed the Women's Royal Indian Naval Service in March 1945 but remaining a part of the WAC(I). The WAC(I) cap badge consisted of a laurel wreath enclosing the letters 'WAC' over 'INDIA'.

NEW ZEALAND

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)

Volunteers of the Women's War Service Auxiliary had been assisting the Army since 1940 but it was not until June 1942 that the WAAC(NZ) were formed as part of New Zealand's military forces. WAAC(NZ) ranks were nicknamed 'Tuis', and they performed similar duties to the ATS, as well as providing medical orderlies for hospitals and canteen staff to serve at home and overseas. Auxiliary status was retained throughout the war and despite replacing men the WAAC(NZ) received less pay for doing the same job. By July 1943 WAAC strength had reached 4,600 all ranks.

Women's Royal New Zealand Naval Service (WRNZNS)

During 1941 proposals for the formation of a women's naval service met with a negative response. It was considered that the organisational requirements involved outweighed the benefits of releasing a limited number of men for sea service. The events of December 1941 changed the opinion of the RNZN, and approval was given in June 1942 for the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service (New Zealand). The title was later changed to Women's Royal New Zealand Naval Service. Uniform was similar to that of the WRNS but was worn with grey stockings and gloves and a brimmed felt hat with 'HMNZS' ribbon. For special duties, such as boat crew, male clothing and caps were issued.

NZWAAF Ranks

NZWAAF equivalent	RNZAF rank
AW1	AC1
LWA	LAC
Corporal	Corporal
Sergeant	Sergeant
Senior Sergeant	Flight Sergeant
Under Officer	Warrant Officer

Officer ranks were the same as those used by the British WAAF.

WRNZS ranks were the same as in the WRNS, but included the additional unique rank of 'fourth officer' who wore a half-width sleeve stripe. Commissioned rank was only gained by joining as a probationary Wren and achieving promotion through the ranks. By comparison with other services the WRNZNS was quite small, with roughly 500 members.

New Zealand Women's Auxiliary Air Force (NZWAAF)

Formed in January 1941, the WAAF were an integral part of the RNZAF. Initially no rank structure was authorised other than supervisors, and no badges were worn. In October 1942 the service had expanded to such a degree, and was undertaking such a wide range of employment, that it was felt necessary to introduce a rank structure. Uniforms were cut from barathea fabric and were similar to those worn by the British WAAF but differed in pocket design and by having a stylish box-pleated skirt for all ranks. A beret replaced the felt hat for all occasions, including wear with the service dress uniform. A smart blue/grey dress with brass buttons and belt was issued as workwear, with an open neck and flap top pockets at each breast and at the hip. Khaki drill tunic, skirt and dress were issued to those requiring them.

BURMA

Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma) (WAS(B))

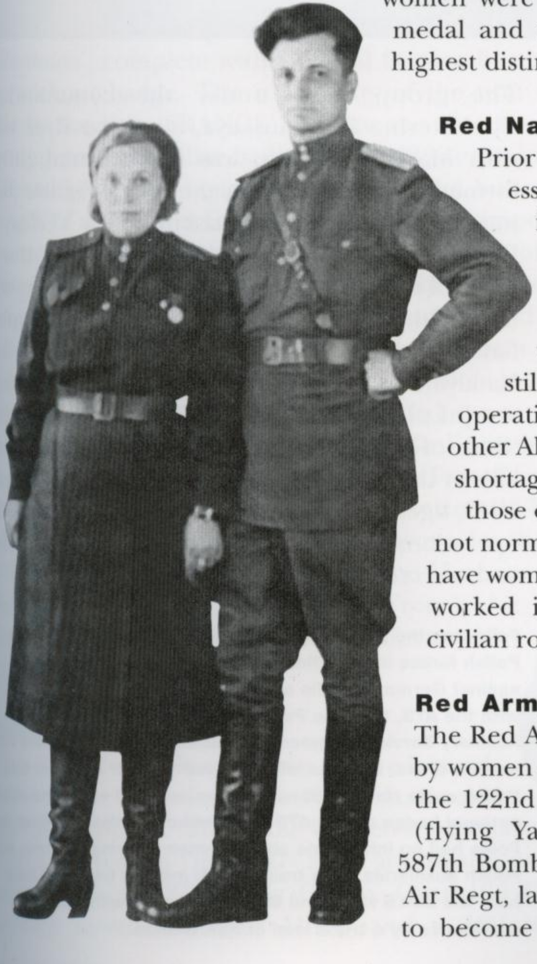
The 'Wasbies' were formed in Burma on 16 January 1942 to perform clerical and cipher duties at the Burma Army HQ. As the Japanese advanced through Burma the Wasbies retreated with the army, their duties increasing with the enormity of the onslaught. About 300 were evacuated from Rangoon by sea as the town was overrun by the Japanese; 65 remained with the Burma Corps as they retreated the 1,000 miles to India – the longest British retreat in history. The Wasbies returned to Burma with the 14th Army for whom they provided a mobile canteen service. Their efforts earned the praise of both the troops and General Slim who, as commander of Burcorps and the 14th Army, witnessed their performance at first hand. The WAS(B) was disbanded in Japan in early 1946. Initially uniform consisted of a dress of khaki aertex upper 'blouse' with pockets at each breast and drill fabric lower 'skirt' with belted waist and twin pockets at the front hip. The dress was augmented by drill slacks and bush jacket as necessitated by duties. By 1944 jungle green had replaced khaki and British or Indian divisional insignia were proudly worn on the sleeve, with the 'Chinthe' emblem on the headwear and lapels. Headwear consisted of field service cap or pith helmet, later replaced by a beret and bush hat; in the field these were often augmented by headscarves in KD or JG to match the uniform.

SOVIET UNION

Red Army

During World War I and the Russian Civil War which followed th Bolshevik revolution of 1917, whole battalions of infantrywomen ha

The Red Army underwent a major revision of uniforms and insignia from January 1943, when *Prikaz 25* from the Commissar of Defence re-introduced the Imperial pattern *pogoni* (shoulder boards) on a standing-collar *gymnastiorka* (shirt-tunic). Rank and branch insignia moved from the collar to the shoulder boards. One new item introduced under the regulations was a khaki-green dress for female soldiers. The lower skirt section had a broad box pleat to the front, while the upper section resembled the *gymnastiorka* buttoning to the female (left) side. The uniform is finished off with a brown leather waistbelt, black leather boots and khaki-green beret; during World War II the beret was worn only by female personnel. (Courtesy Laszlo Bekeski)



been raised. When the USSR was plunged into the Great Patriotic War huge numbers of women would be mobilised in the cause of the Motherland. Initially more than 400,000 women were trained, mainly as doctors, nurses, orderlies and stretcher-bearers; more than 40 per cent of front line medical personnel would be women. By the end of the first year of war they represented some 8 per cent of Red Army personnel, and by 1945 conservative estimates put the figure at 800,000 – some ten per cent of the army's total strength. They soon broke out of the universally accepted medical and administrative roles. By VE-Day about one million women – three-quarters of them conscripts – had served as machine gunners, combat engineers, signallers, anti-aircraft gunners, telegraphists, truck drivers, despatch riders, tank and SPG crew and reconnaissance scouts, often in wholly mixed units and in total equality. The widespread publicity given to the exploits of women snipers had an impact on German morale. Among the most celebrated were volunteers such as R.Shrypnikova, O.Bykova, Roza Shanina (nicknamed 'Horny') with 54 confirmed kills, and Nina Lobovskaya, credited with 89 victims. Most famous of all was Lt.Lyudmilla Pavlichenko, who had 309 confirmed kills.

During the Great Patriotic War three army women – sniper Petrova, machine-gunner Stanilizhene and aircraft gunner Zhurkina – were awarded all three classes (bronze, silver & gold) of the Order of Glory, the most highly respected soldiers' decoration; additionally, 86 women were awarded the Order of Lenin with the Gold Star medal and title of Hero of the Soviet Union, the country's highest distinction.

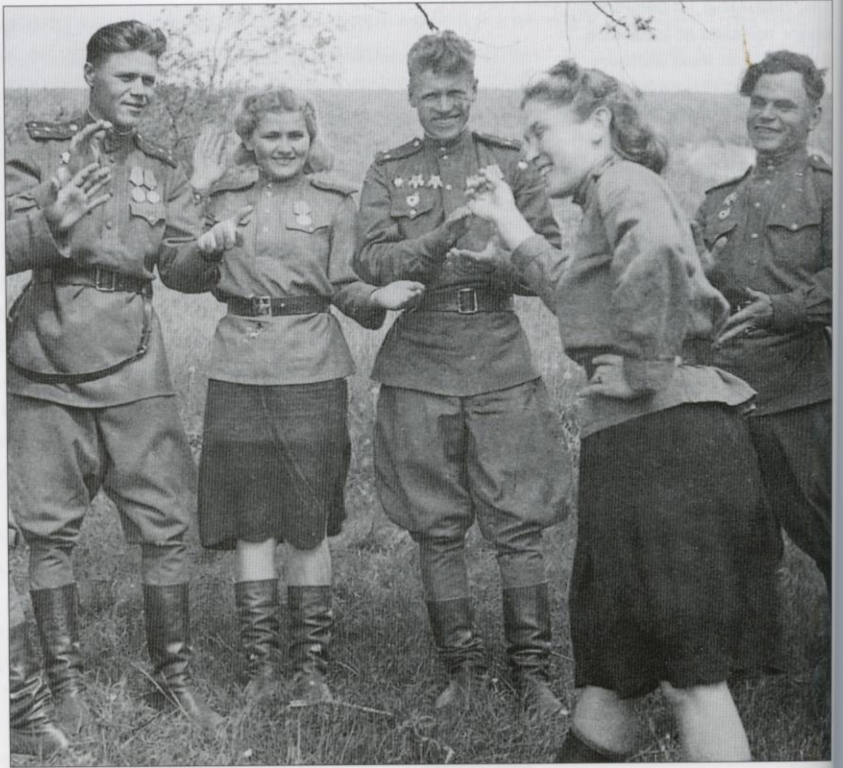
Red Navy

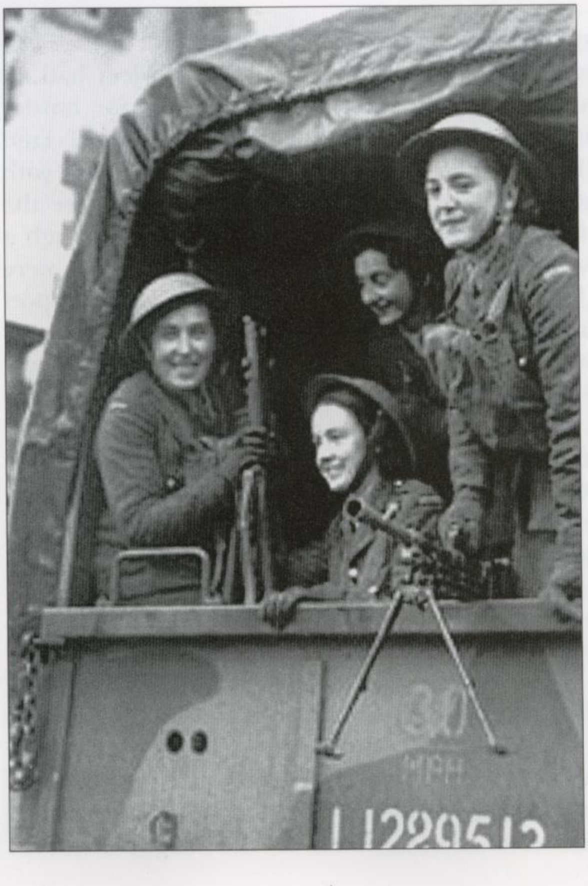
Prior to the Great Patriotic War the Red Fleet had an essentially non-strategic role, being used for border integrity, coastal operations and support of land forces in amphibious operations. War with Germany (and, eventually, Japan) was to see the Red Navy dramatically increased in size, though it was never a 'high seas fleet' and its capabilities were still limited to submarine, coastal and land support operations in the Baltic and the Black Sea. In common with other Allied navies women were used to help ease manpower shortages. Soviet female auxiliaries fulfilled roles similar to those of other naval auxiliaries such as the WRNS; they did not normally crew warships, although a number of vessels did have women on their complement. Many Russian women also worked in ports and dockyard facilities in auxiliary and civilian roles.

Red Army Air Force

The Red Army Air Force had three regiments entirely crewed by women – pilots, armourers, mechanics and staff – forming the 122nd Air Group. These were the 586th Fighter Air Regt (flying Yak-1, -7B and -9 single-seat day fighters); the 587th Bomber Air Regt (PE-2s); and the 588th Night Bomber Air Regt, later 46th Guards Regt (PO-2 biplanes) – supposedly to become known to the Germans as the 'Night Witches'.

May 1945: Red Army officers celebrate final victory in the Great Patriotic War. The women wear the male pattern khaki *gymnastiorka* with the pre-war dark blue service dress skirt, 1935 pattern waistbelt and calf length black leather boots; a khaki-green skirt was available for field dress (see Plate H2), though many women wore male trousers. Although Russian women did not generally serve in the ranks of infantry units they did perform a number of combatant roles. Some 300,000 – a third of the total – served in the AA organisation. At least one female rifle regiment was raised in Moscow in 1941, and perhaps a brigade. The Central Women's Sniper School graduated some 1,000 trainees; and an unknown number of women fought in mixed tank and self-propelled gun units. Altogether 86 women were awarded the highest decoration, the gold star of Hero of the Soviet Union. (Courtesy Laszlo Bekeski)





The group came under the command of Col.Katerina Bershanskaya, a pre-war flyer who, with Marina Raskova, was instrumental in the formation of these units; the 586th Fighter Regt was led by Maj.Tamara Kazarinova. By VE-Day 30 Russian airwomen had received the gold star of Hero of the Soviet Union, 22 of them serving with the 588th/46th Guards Regiment. Among many famous female pilots were Katerina Fedotova and Natalya Meklin, and the leading woman fighter ace Jr.Lt.Lydia Litvak of the 586th – the so-called 'Rose of Stalingrad' – who was credited with 12 kills by the time of her death in action on 1 August 1943, aged 22 years. In all the 586th flew 4,419 operational sorties, took part in 125 air combats, and was credited with 38 confirmed victories.

Following the fall of France some 19,000 members of the Polish forces in exile fled to Britain to continue the fight against Germany. While a number of Polish women served with the ATS, the Free Polish Army had its own Women's Auxiliary Service, *Pomocnicza Stuzba Kobiet.* They wore ATS service dress, with the white-on-red 'Poland' shoulder title, Polish eagle tunic buttons, and the crowned eagle and shield national badge on the ATS cap. Unlike the Western Allies the Poles had no inhibitions about women carrying firearms, and Polish auxiliaries were trained with infantry weapons; note here the SMLE rifles and Bren gun carried with cheerful confidence by a truck load of PSK women.

FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

Poland

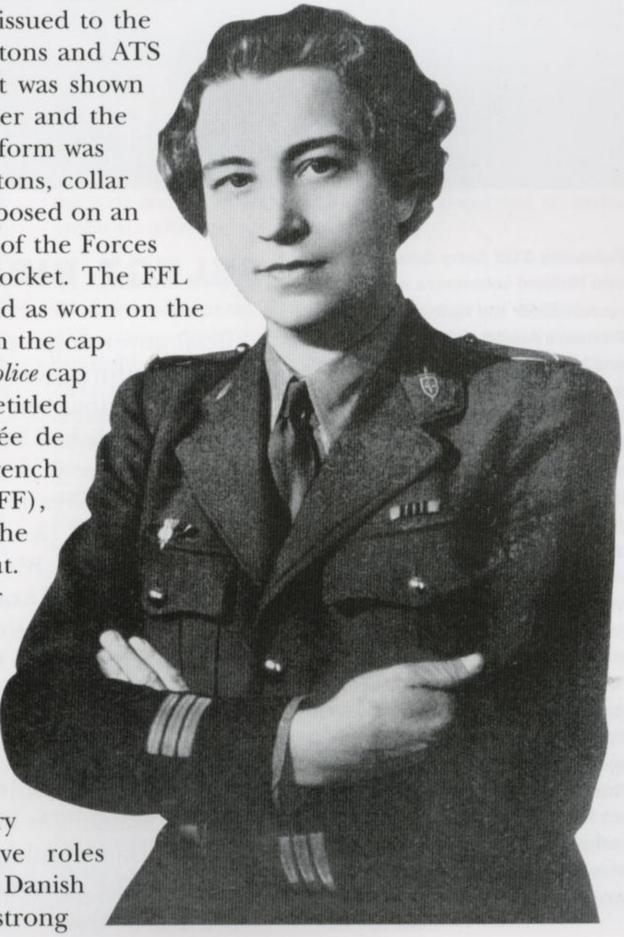
Following the fall of Poland many thousands of Poles fled to France and Britain, and many of the former again escaped to Britain after the fall of France. The majority of these men joined the 1st Polish Corps formed in Britain and later the 2nd Corps in Iran. Polish women who had fled their native country and others living in Britain wished to support their menfolk; thus the Pomocnicza Stuzba Kobiet ('Women's Auxiliary Service'), known as the 'Polish ATS', came into existence. The women wore ATS uniforms with white-on-red 'Poland' shoulder title, Polish eagle buttons and Polish eagle cap insignia. Unlike the ATS, the Poles were allowed to carry arms and were often to be seen standing sentry, alongside male ranks, dressed in ATS service dress with 37 pattern web equipment and an SMLE rifle. Four thousand Polish women served in the Women's Auxiliary Service.

France

Free French Forces in Britain were supported by the 'Femmes Francaises Indépendantes' (Corps Volontaire Francais), often referred to as the 'French ATS'. It was formed on 19 June 1940 under command of Mme Simone Mathieu, although control later passed to Capitaine (later Commandant) Hélène Terré who led the unit until the end of the war. First pattern ATS uniform was issued to the '*volontaires*', complete with General Service buttons and ATS cap without badge. The nationality of the unit was shown only by the title 'FRANCE' worn at the shoulder and the flaming grenade collar badges. In 1942 the uniform was adapted by adding typically French domed buttons, collar badges of a shielded Cross-of-Lorraine superimposed on an inverted sword, and the winged sword insignia of the Forces Francaises Libre worn over the right breast pocket. The FFL insignia's central motif was the sword and shield as worn on the collar; a laurel wreath was added to this to form the cap badge which was worn on a French *bonnet de police* cap in khaki or dark blue. The service was later retitled the Service de Formation Feminine de l'Armée de Terre. Volunteers also served with the Free French Navy's Section Feminine de la Flotte (SFF), adopting a uniform similar to that worn by the WRNS; they were commanded by Mme Herbout. Volunteers serving with the Free French Air Force (FAFL) wore a dark blue uniform with white shirt and black tie.

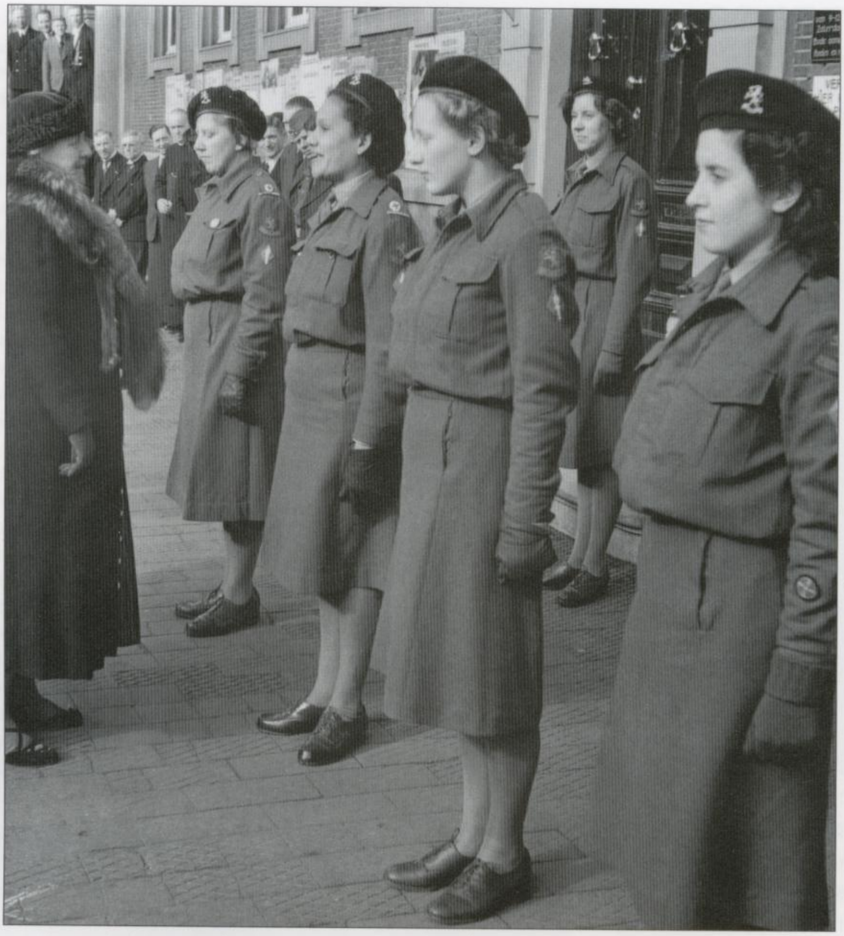
Other nationalities

The Royal Netherlands Army was re-formed following the liberation of the Netherlands, and the auxiliaries of the VHK Women's Auxiliary Corps served in medical and administrative roles with the British 21st Army Group. Over 100 Danish women served with the Allies; and a 199-strong



Capitaine (later Cdt.) Hélène Terré, commanding the Free French *Service de Formation Feminine de l'Armée de Terre*. She wears a typical French male pattern officer's service dress tunic with three rank bars at each cuff and on the epaulettes. The ribbon of the Croix de Guerre is worn over the left breast pocket; a winged sword Free French Forces badge above the right; and sword, shield and Cross of Lorraine badges on the collar points.

Norwegian Women's Corps was formed to support escapees from the Norwegian military who had managed to cross the North Sea to Britain. In Canada a joint Naval and Army Air Services training unit for Norwegian airmen – 'Little Norway' – was to become a Royal Norwegian Air Force training unit after the two arms were merged to form the RNAF in 1944. Provision was made for RNAF female auxiliaries to serve as nurses and general auxiliaries performing a number of administrative tasks. Basic uniform consisted of a stylish dress with full button front and waistbelt; 'NORWAY' titles in white on dark blue were occasionally worn at the shoulder, and for those qualified, specialisation wings were worn on the right breast.



Following 21st Army Group's move into Holland volunteers were recruited for the Netherlands Women's Auxiliary Corps (VHK), and training began at ATS centres in early 1945. In March 1945 Queen Wilhelmina visited liberated parts of Holland, and she is shown here meeting members of the VHK serving with British I Corps artillery. The white spearhead on a red and blue diamond is clearly visible on the sleeve, worn below the orange lion emblem of the Royal Netherlands Brigade (Princess Irene's) worn by all Dutch troops. These women all wear ATS BD blouse and skirt with dark blue berets or GS caps bearing the Dutch lion insignia. The mix of SD skirt and BD blouse, not regulation in the UK, had been authorised for use within 21st Army Group by all ATS and foreign auxiliaries. (IWM SE3975)

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THE PLATES

A: GREAT BRITAIN – WRNS

A1: WRNS despatch rider; Portsmouth Naval Base, February 1941

The Motor Transport branch was one of the earliest trade groups open to female volunteers, and WRNS despatch riders provided vital rapid transfer of documents such as sealed 'sailing orders'. MT ratings received driver instruction as well as vehicle and engine maintenance training. For MT personnel standard WRNS uniform was augmented by MT gauntlets, leather boots, male ratings' bell-bottom trousers and duffel coats. Headgear was initially a peaked cap similar to the ATS cap but without the pleated crown and with a cap ribbon; this was replaced by the motorcyclist's pulp helmet, and later the steel helmet. Ratings' trousers were issued to all WRNS trade groups requiring them as work-wear; the flap front and double hip fastening of naval trousers was not unlike that used on female garments, while the standard fly front would have been frowned upon.

WRNS rating's clothing issue (gratuitous): 1 wool overcoat, 1 raincoat, 2 jackets, 2 skirts, 4 white shirts, 9 collars, 1 tie, 2 pairs shoes, 3 pairs stockings, 1 cap & cap ribbon (or red flash & badge for Royal Marine establishments), 1 hat, tricorn, for senior rates, 1 pair woollen gloves.

A2: WRNS Third Officer; UK, 1942

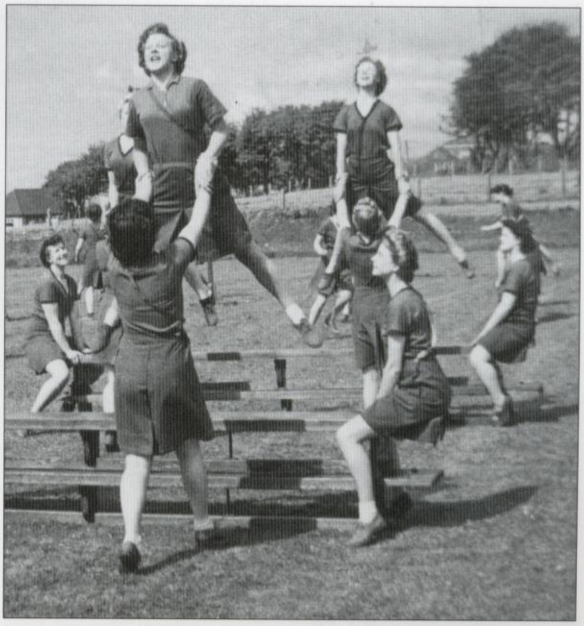
The WRNS officer's dress, based upon that worn by RN officers, had a particularly smart appearance. Like that of the ratings it consisted of a double-breasted jacket closed on the female (left) side with a double row of four gilt buttons (black horn for junior rates), and a skirt with double box pleats. The ratings' jacket lacked the left breast pocket and had rectangular external skirt pocket flaps. The officer's cap was of a tricorn style and bore the naval officer's crown and wreathed anchor insignia with the wreath in bright blue; this style of cap was also worn by WRNS senior rates, again with the badge in blue. WRNS officer rank was displayed by lace cuff rings in bright blue, having a diamond instead of the RN officer's circular loop in the top ring.

WRNS officers received a uniform grant of £55.00 towards the cost of purchasing the following items: tricorn hat with badge, double-breasted jacket, skirt, greatcoat, watch coat (a heavy version of the greatcoat), raincoat, shirt, tie, stockings, shoes and gloves. An additional £10.00 was granted for those requiring tropical clothing: drill dresses, working shirt, working skirt, felt hat, canvas shoes, stockings and ankle socks.

A3: WRNS radio mechanic; HMS *Sparrowhawk*, May 1942

At naval air stations a number of radio mechanics were required to fly in order to test communications equipment; although not all flew as part of their duties, 1,132 Wrens served as radio mechanics during the war, with a further 39 officers serving as air radio officers. Gearing up for a test flight from Royal Naval Air Station Hatston, this girl is donning a pre-war 1932 pattern 'Mae West' life preserver over a 1930 pattern Sidcot flying suit (the latter were made in a range of shades from grey to light khaki). The 1940 pattern flying boots have suede outer and fleece inner; they were later modified by the addition of a leather ankle strap, helping to prevent loss on baling out, and redesignated the 1941 pattern.

Where no specific female uniform items were available it was standard practice to issue male clothing. These 'loan clothing' items were generally specialist clothing that was cut oversize and with limited fitting ranges (often only small, medium and large) and which therefore presented no major problems when being worn by women.



ATS auxiliaries of a mixed AA battery undergo physical training wearing the brown and fox-red Shirt, PT, ATS, and Skirt, Divided, ATS (see Plate B2). PT clothing was on limited distribution; training establishments and mixed-sex AA batteries were among the few who received an issue. Although all ATS units were expected to undertake PT, few actually did so.

B: GREAT BRITAIN – ATS

B1: Lance-Corporal, ATS Provost; UK, spring 1943

ATS policewomen patrolled in pairs and had the same authority as CMP ranks. This 'Redcap' wears the first type 1941 pattern tunic, closing on the male side, with pleated breast pockets; the male pattern stiffened SD cap with red cover; MP brassard on the right arm, police whistle in the left breast pocket, and 'PROVOST' shoulder titles. Brown shoes and lisle stockings complete the uniform; Provost ranks, and those serving in mixed AA batteries, were also issued heavy woollen stockings. The original ATS 'member's' tunic had no waist belt; this was introduced with the 1941 pattern uniform. Subsequently the 1941 uniform was modified by having the pocket pleats deleted; later, in keeping with austerity measures, the buttons were made of green plastic (normally replaced by brass at the earliest opportunity).

Before the introduction of the Defence (Women's Forces) Regulations of April 1941, embodying the women's services into the armed forces, it was almost impossible to punish a volunteer defaulter, the only remedy for persistent offenders being discharge. In 1941 guides for the application of King's Regulations and the Army Act to ATS ranks were published, though with major limitations. However, with a few notable exceptions discipline in the ATS was good, absenteeism being the most frequent misdemeanour.

B2: Physical training kit; UK, June 1942

Physical training had always been on the ATS syllabus although it was only made compulsory by an ACI issued in June 1942. Volunteers or Army PT Corps staff had always supervised PT, but the first full time ATS instructors were not trained until November 1941, and the ATS PT school opened in April 1942. The ACI was rarely enforced, and many units undertook no PT whatsoever, on the pretext that there was no time available or that facilities and clothing issues were inadequate. Within AA Command the nature of the work demanded fitness, and if time was available every effort was made to ensure PT took place. Issue of ATS PT kit was restricted to PT staff, AA Command, Officer Cadet Training Units, MT and basic training centres. This girl wears, in ATS colours, a Shirt PT, Skirt Divided PT, and standard issue Shoes PT usually worn with ankle socks. Instructors were also issued a tracksuit.

B3: Officer, Range Staff, Eastern Command; Sheerness, December 1940

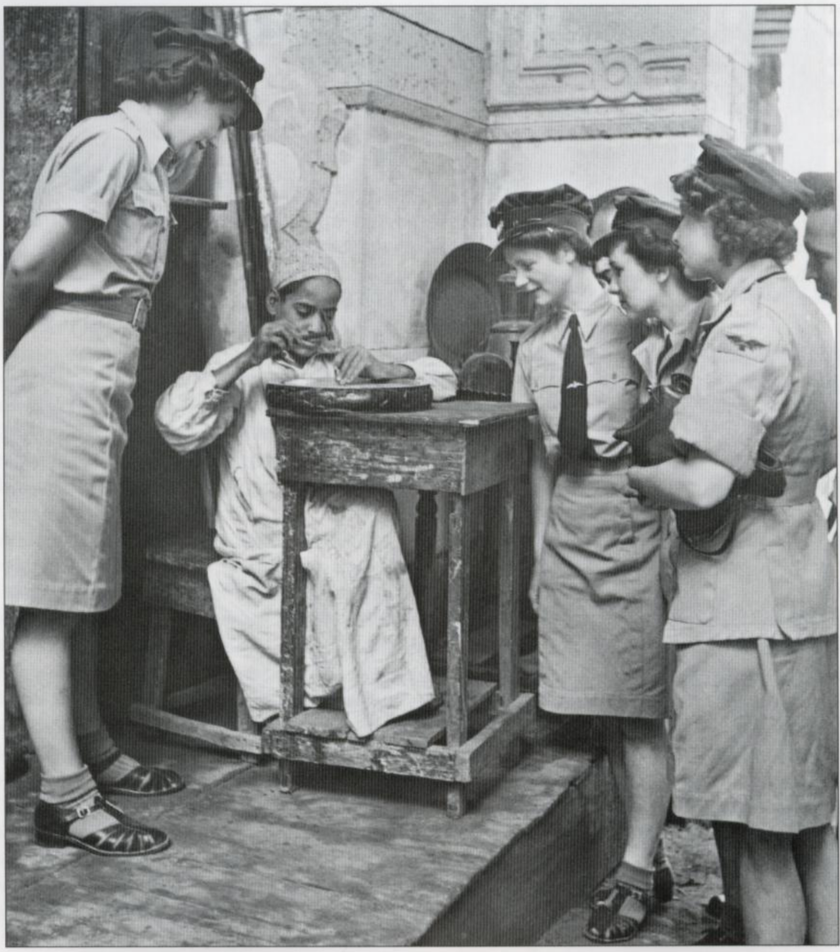
To make them highly visible during range work, often in front of the guns, officers serving at the Experimental Gunnery Establishment at Sheerness wore a distinctive uniform of navy blue blazer, white shirt and white skirt, with red and blue Royal Artillery coloured FS cap – a uniform derived from that worn by the male officers they had replaced. Officers undertaking such research work into gunnery and ballistics were science graduates and experts in their field.

Under 1941 regulations officers' uniform consisted of the following mandatory items: 2 SD caps with badge, 2 SD jackets, 2 SD skirts, 2 drab shirts, 4 drab collars, 1 pair brown gloves, 1 drab tie, 1 greatcoat, 2 pairs brown shoes and 4 pair drab stockings – for which a grant of £40.00 was allowed.

C: GREAT BRITAIN – WAAF

C1: Aircraftwoman; UK, November 1940

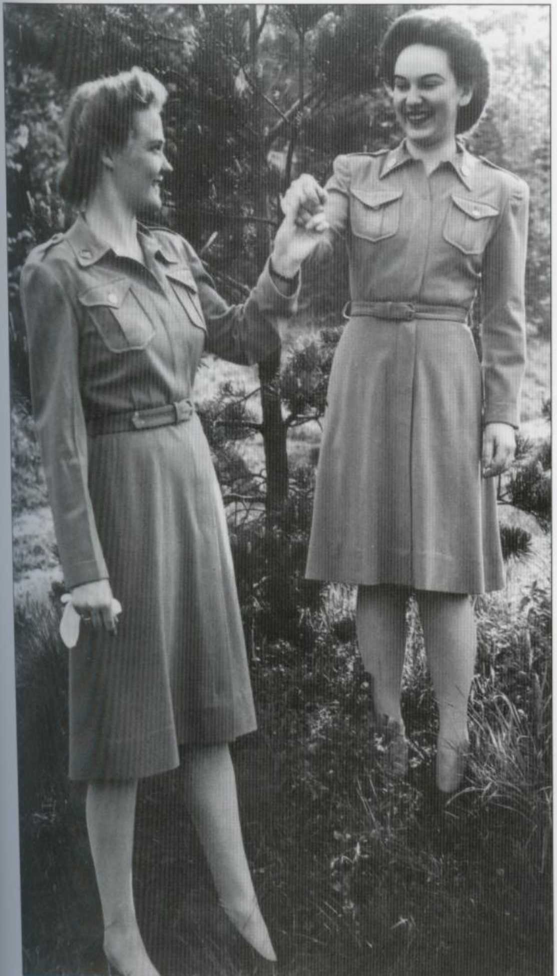
This Waaf models the newly introduced greatcoat, a smart and warm item normally worn over the wool SD uniform. The WAAF greatcoat differed from that issued to airmen in having a double row of five brass buttons rather than the four of the male pattern; there was no belt or expansion pleat in the rear, as the coat was not required to be worn over equipment. The RAF eagle and rank badges were worn on the sleeves, but photos suggest that the 'A' below the shoulder eagle (see below) was not generally applied to the coat. The British were slow to provide greatcoats for their women's services, and in the case of the WAAF it was only the intervention of the king that speeded up the decision; before November 1940 officers had worn a private purchase barathea greatcoat while airwomen had to make do with a lightweight raincoat.

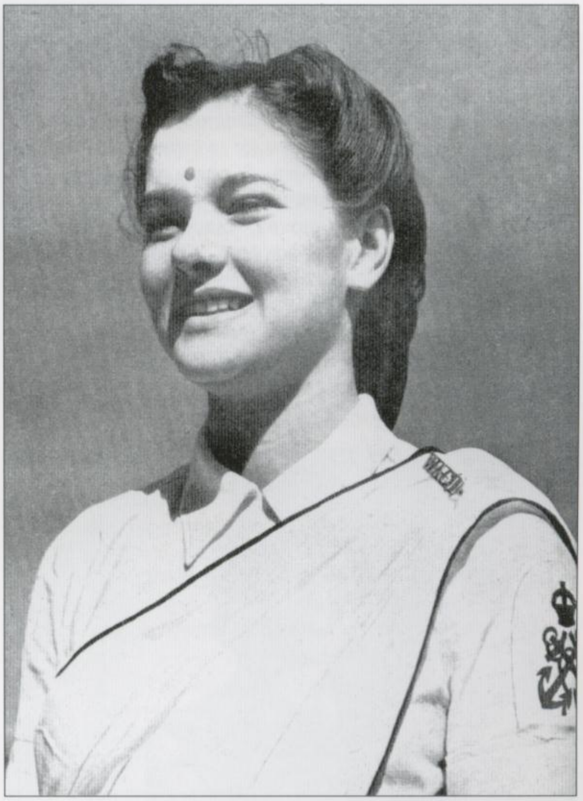


Waafs off duty somewhere in the Middle East display a mix of tropical clothing. Before 1944 the limited number of Waafs needing khaki drill clothing meant that it was generally locally procured. On 27 March 1944 the first large WAAF draft for overseas service embarked for the Middle East, and this led to KD being produced in the UK for issue before departure. Officially Waafs were required to wear a khaki shirt, black tie, bush shirt, drill skirt, wool stockings and blue cap. The realities of tropical service soon saw ankle socks and sandals replacing wool stockings and shoes, but any other concessions were hard won. These women wear (from left to right): KD skirt and shirt minus tie and with the bush shirt belt worn at the waist; KD skirt and shirt and regulation black tie; KD skirts, bush shirts over shirt and tie, with ankle socks and sandals. All wear the blue wool cap, which from 1944 could be replaced by the RAF field service cap. The red-on-khaki RAF eagle shoulder insigni (right) is a locally produced example with distinctively splaye feathers. The same Waaf's handbag is an unofficial purchas (IWM CM5814)

C2: Leading Aircraftwoman, Fighter Command; UK, 1942
This LACW is working as an aircraft plotter (Clerk, Special Duties Group IV) in a Fighter Command operations room. She wears the WAAF blue-grey service dress introduced in 1939, with RAF trade and rank insignia. Generally it differed from the ATS service dress which inspired it only in having a separate belt, and a black mohair band and black leather peak to the cap. Before December 1941 an 'A' for Auxiliary had been worn below the RAF shoulder eagle by other ranks (and in gilt or brass on each lapel by officers); from 1942 the large numbers of conscripted Waafs made the continued use of this insignia by 'old hands' the proud mark of a pre-conscription volunteer. The relative attractiveness of the WAAF uniform led many women to volunteer, rather than wear the drabber ATS equivalent – a problem that was only overcome with the introduction of conscription.

C3: Meteorologist, RAF Chivenor; UK, June 1944
Meteorologists were Group II tradeswomen responsible for making observations and interpreting readings for weather forecasts – a vital part of the preparation for flying missions. This Waaf wears the second pattern, buttoned-front Overalls, Workers, over her service dress as she prepares to release a weather balloon, which will be tracked to give wind speed and direction measurements.





ABOVE **Petty Officer Barry, WAC(I); the naval wing was renamed Women's Royal Indian Naval Service in March 1945 but remained part of the WAC(I). Uniform was similar to the WRNS, in blue for winter and white for summer but with Indian naval buttons and, for ratings, an 'HMIS' cap tally. PO Barry, apparently an Anglo-Indian, wears the native ranks' white *sari* with blue trim, and a brass 'WAC(I)' title on her left shoulder, with a petty officer's rate badge in blue on the left sleeve of the white blouse. (See also Plates E1 & E2.)**

LEFT **The winter version of the US WAC off-duty dress (see Plate F3). Before September 1943 Waacs/Wacs had been authorised to wear civilian clothing at social functions if approved by unit commanders. Once the corps was fully incorporated into the US Army this privilege was withdrawn, summer or winter service uniform being worn thereafter on all formal and social occasions. The OQMG accepted that some form of evening dress for off-duty wear could be acquired as an optional item at personal expense. A design was approved in May 1944, as an issue item. Summer and winter versions were made: the illustrated Dress, WAC, Winter, Tan, of 7oz wool crepe, and the Dress, WAC, Summer, Beige, in a 4oz rayon shantung fabric. The wool garrison cap was authorised for wear with the winter dress, along with leather dress gloves; a scarf could be worn under the wool overcoat if worn. The summer dress was worn, normally with the collar open, with a matching cap and cotton dress gloves; the sleeves could be shortened at individual discretion. The use of a commercial handbag was authorised; if the WAC utility bag was used it was to be carried with shoulder strap removed. (US National Archives)**

WAAF clothing issue, basic home service scale: 1 greatcoat, 1 cap with badge (second cap issued after 12 months' service), 1 cap comforter, 2 jackets SD, 2 skirts SD (or 1 SD uniform and one BD style 'Suit, Working, Serge' for some trade groups), 2 blue overalls, 1 cardigan, 3 shirts, 6 collars, 4 pairs stockings, 3 pairs shoes (or two pairs shoes, 1 pair ankle boots), 3 pairs knickers, 3 pairs panties, 3 vests, 2 brassieres, 2 pairs pyjamas, 1 pair slacks (if not issued working dress), 1 pair gloves, black beret (for flight mechanics in lieu of second cap). Other clothing and necessaries were issued depending on employment.

Additional clothing, tropical issue: 1 slouch hat with RAF flash, 2 brassieres, 2 pairs knickers, 4 pairs panties, 2 bush shirts, 3 drill skirts, 3 tropical shirts, 2 pairs ankle socks, 3 pairs stockings, 4 cellular vests, 1 FS cap.

D: CANADA, AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

D1: Canada: CWAC Cinematographer; UK, 1944

The CWAC uniform was a well-cut ensemble, the tunic having bellows pockets at the skirt with a single pocket on the left breast. Winter uniform was khaki wool, with a lighter weight tan version for summer. Both uniforms had 'beechnut-brown' epaulettes bearing the title 'CWAC', originally in brass for other ranks and gilt for officers, but later replaced by cloth titles. At the shoulder all ranks wore the 'CANADA' title in buff on brown backing (in gold wire for officers) above the maple leaf badge on black. The text colour of 'buff' was later changed to yellow for both titles, but it was not uncommon for the colours to be mixed on the uniform. Buttons bore the head of Athene and 'CWAC' (often said to stand for 'Cutest Women in All of Canada'). Collar titles were a matched pair of lozenge-shaped insignia in brass (gilt for officers), with the head of Athene above 'CWAC' on a scroll. NCO chevrons were worn on beechnut-brown backing.

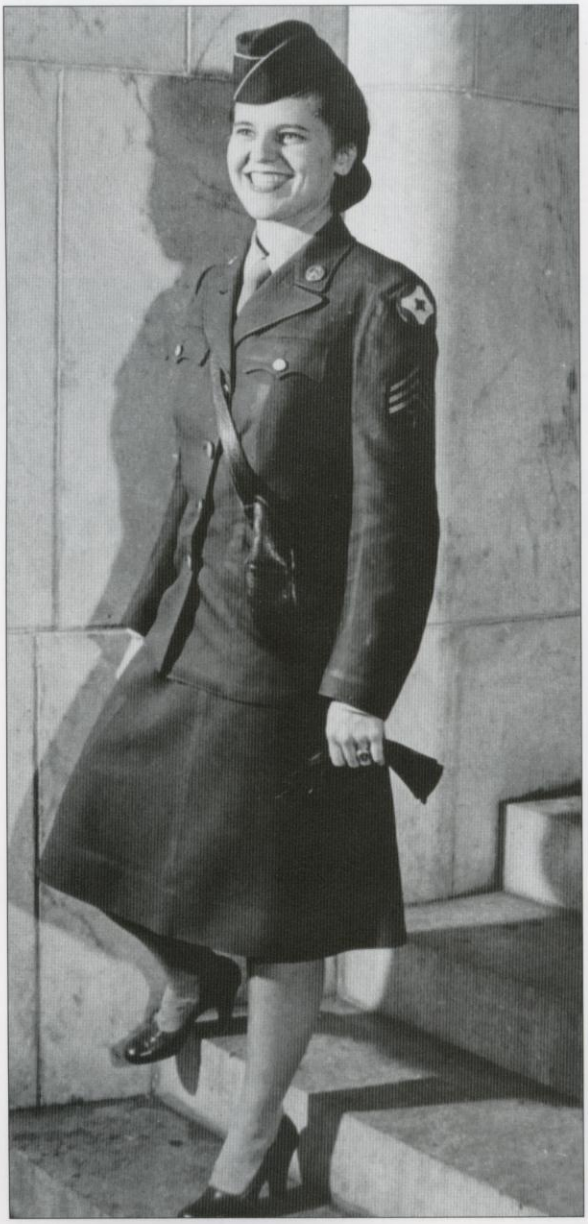
The hot summers encountered by ATS ranks serving in Washington DC alongside the CWAC and WAC led to their adoption of the CWAC summer uniform, with the ATS wool uniform worn in winter; the CWAC uniform was worn with GS buttons, ATS badges and the wool ATS cap. A tropical worsted version of the ATS cap was authorised in summer 1945 but was very short-lived, being withdrawn when the ATS returned to the UK shortly after its first issue.

D2: Australia: Under Officer, WAAAF; New Guinea, January 1944

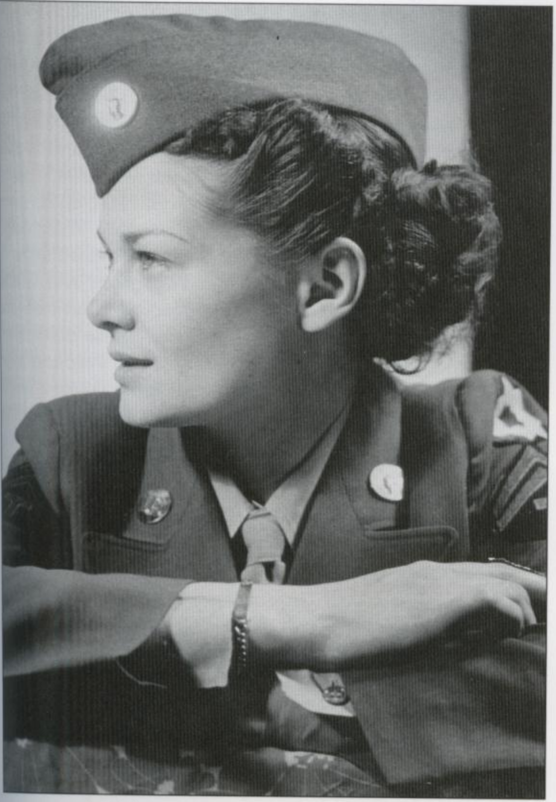
After a photo of Under Officer (Warrant Officer) Cook R.Hudson of the Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force on a tour of New Guinea to teach front line troops how best to prepare the dehydrated meat and vegetable rations which they were being issued. U/O Hudson wears the standard WAAAF dark blue SD cap with U/O cap badge in gilt; with tropical dress the regulation headgear was in fact a broad-brimmed slouch hat (without the 'Digger's' turned up left brim) and with a cloth paggri bearing an RAAF flash on the left side and a blackened RAAF cap badge to the front. Khaki tropical shirts and side-fastening slacks were almost universal throughout the Allied women's services in the tropics, similar patterns being worn by the WAAF, ATS, WAC and others. WAAAF winter uniform consisted of a dark blue jacket, skirt and cap similar in cut to British WAAF uniform; early skirts had a central box pleat but this was soon dropped in favour of a simpler four-gore pattern.

D3: New Zealand: Auxiliary, WAAC(NZ); Auckland, 1944

Similar to the ATS service dress, the uniform of the WAAC(NZ) was of a finer fabric with bellows pockets on the tunic skirt and twin box pleats to the uniform skirt. It was worn with tan shirt and tie, lisle stockings and brown Oxford shoes, and brown leather gloves. Drill frocks were worn as workwear, and Battledress was issued to drivers and AA



Regulation winter service uniform as worn in late 1944 by a WAC T4 of the 4th Service Command HQ, Atlanta, Georgia. She wears the Cap, Garrison, Wool, WAC, piped 'old gold' and green; the tan Shirt, Cotton, Khaki, Women's; the Skirt, WAC, Enlisted Women's, Winter; Gloves, Leather, Dress, Women's; and civilian brown dress pumps of a design authorised for wear with the off-duty dress in summer 1944. The WAC utility bag is worn as per November 1943 regulations. (See also Plate G3.)



A fine study of an American WAC T5 (technician fifth grade) wearing the winter service dress tunic with khaki cotton shirt, an attractive alternative to the regulation wool shirt normally worn with this uniform. Note the unpiped male-pattern OD garrison cap with WAC collar insignia attached to the left front; and the shoulder patch of 7th Service Command.

ranks. For tropical wear a khaki drill blouse, skirt and slacks were issued as workwear with white dresses for formal wear. Headgear consisted of a universal pattern field service cap; and this brimmed brown felt hat with a khaki paggri bearing the WAAC(NZ) cap badge **(inset 3A).** The Latin motto 'PRO PATRIA' ('For Our Country') surmounts a tui, a bird native to New Zealand; WAAC(NZ) auxiliaries were nicknamed 'Tuis'.

E: INDIA & BURMA

E1: India: Lance-Naik, WAC(I); Staff of the Administrative Commandant; Quetta, 1943

Although an integral part of the Indian Army with full military status, in keeping with local custom all WAC(I) members, native or British, were billeted and messed separately from male ranks and male/female contact was kept to a minimum. This Indian WAC(I) lance-corporal wears the khaki *sari*, the traditional Indian female dress and an optional concession to dress regulations for native ranks. The khaki shirt bears cloth shoulder slides bearing the embroidered letters 'WAC(I)' in black, and white tape rank badges. From July 1944 the Director WAC(I) was the Countess of Carlisle, previously a Senior Controller in the ATS. The WAC(I) had received little training since its formation and was in dire need of direction; accompanying the new director were a number of ATS instructors and staff who would train the WAC(I) to ATS standards. The new group was made welcome despite a feeling of resentment among some native ranks, who were already succumbing to anti-government propaganda from the independence movement.

E2: India: Auxiliary, WAC(I); Cornwallis Barracks, Bangalore, 1944

British personnel serving in the WAC(I) wore a uniform based on that of the ATS. Normal dress consisted of KD bush jacket and skirt with KD field service cap, with brass 'WAC(I)' shoulder titles. We have emphasised here the variations in shade to be seen after lengthy use and laundering. Unlike the ATS the WAC(I) were allowed to wear civilian clothes for social events when off duty. A uniform grant was paid at the rate of 200 rupees for officers and 140 for auxiliaries with an annual payment of Rs80 for maintenance and Rs10 monthly for cleaning costs; an additional Rs40 was paid to those who required a woollen winter uniform.

E3: Burma: Auxiliary, WAS(B); Meiktila, April 1945

This 'Wasbie' attached to the 36th Infantry Division wears the jungle green one-piece dress with aertex blouse section and cotton drill skirt section. This mix of fabrics was relatively comfortable and cool on the torso while giving a harder-wearing skirt. The WAS(B)'s Chinthe insignia was worn on each collar, the design being repeated on the black composition buttons. Headgear normally consisted of a bush hat or jungle green headscarf. On the shoulders note the white circle on black of 29th Infantry Brigade; this, combined with the red circle of 72nd Inf Bde, formed the sign of 36th Infantry Division of the British 14th Army.

During April 1945 conditions at Meiktila were severe, with very few buildings standing; Japanese corpses still littered the area, with more uncovered by each downpour of rain. The WAS(B) detachment managed to set up a canteen on the airfield, though it was frequently blown down by the monsoon. Despite the difficulties the canteen somehow managed to provide cakes, cigarettes, and up to 80 gallons of tea a day – a feat which amazed and delighted the exhausted troops waiting to fly out to India.

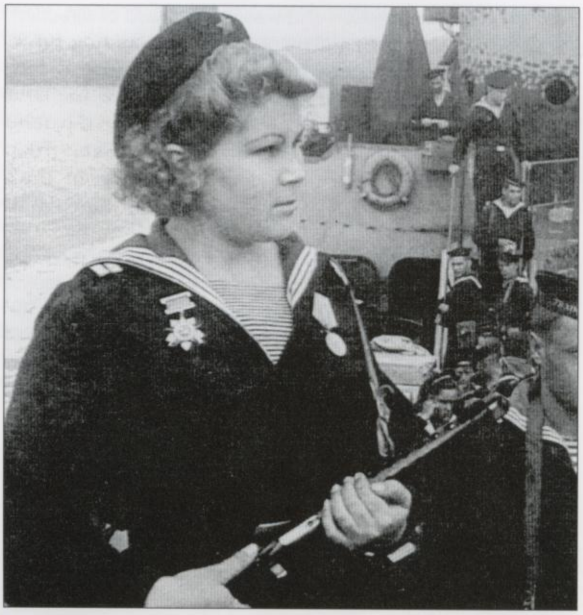
F: UNITED STATES

F1: Weapons examiner, WAC; USA, 1944

Photographed test-firing a .45in M3 sub-machine gun, this Wac wears the brown and white striped Suit, WAC, Exercise. This seersucker fabric dress had a full-length front opening secured with white plastic buttons and a tie waistbelt; it was worn with matching 'modesty' bloomers, and in this case the Shoes, Service, Women's Low, and Anklets, Wool, Women's. The work dress was normally worn with this khaki Hat, WAC, Summer, a 'Daisy May' style which could be worn with the brim turned up – in WAC slang, a 'fish hat'. The exercise suit was first issued to WAACs at Fort Des Moines in July 1942 for use during physical exercises; well received, it was retained as a practical item for workwear.

F2: Private, WAC; Normandy, July 1944

In July 1944 the first detachment of Wacs arrived in Normandy as part of the 'WAC Com Z' (WAC Forward Communication Zone). This Wac wears very up-to-date olive drab field uniform: the first pattern women's M1943 field jacket (identifiable by its seven-button front fastening,



Soviet women's naval auxiliary uniform was similar to that worn by male ratings but the *telniyashka* undershirt had narrower blue and white stripes. A plain red star badge is worn on the dark blue women's beret; trousers or skirt were worn depending on duties. The rank of this *Starshina Vtoroi Stati* (Petty Officer 2nd Class) serving aboard an armoured landing craft of the Amur River Flotilla is marked by two gold lace bars on the shoulders. Decorations include the first pattern Order of the Patriotic War 1st Class on her right breast; this order was introduced on 20 May 1942, but from 19 June 1943 it was no longer awarded on a ribbon but as a screwback badge. On her left breast she wears a campaign medal. Trade or marine insignia were worn on the left sleeve of the blue jumper. Note that she is armed with a PPS-43 sub-machine gun.

later patterns having six), over a wool 'waist' (shirt) and tie, with 'outer cover' trousers, women's field shoes and leggings. Although by the end of July the beachhead had been consolidated and Allied troops were advancing south and east, the M1 helmet was still a necessary item.

F3: Private, WAC; Paris, Easter 1945

This happy young woman from the staff of SHAEF, off-duty in Paris in the spring, wears the Dress, WAC, Winter, Tan. The off-duty dresses proved very popular, providing a smart yet feminine costume. The OQMG put exceptional priority on the acquisition of the new dresses following their approval; it was envisaged that a total of nearly 428,000 winter and 310,000 summer dresses would need to be procured by late spring 1944 in order to meet demand. (Regulations forbade the use of this WAC off-duty dress and the dress scarf by women medical officers.)

F4: The WAAC eagle device. This ungainly looking adaptation of the American bald eagle was discontinued after the WAAC's integration with the US Army in July 1943, being replaced by the standard US coat of arms as worn by Army ranks.

G: UNITED STATES

G1: Corporal, USMCWR; Oahu, Hawaii, August 1945

United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve ranks were termed 'WRs' (or by the media, 'BAMs', for 'Beautiful American Marines'). Winter service uniform consisted of a forest-green tunic with a three-button front and slash pockets at the breasts and hips, a matching skirt, and a visored cap with a red cord; a khaki shirt and tie, and brown leather shoes, gloves and slung 'purse' (handbag) completed the outfit. All buttons and insignia were standard USMC patterns. For summer wear two green and white striped seersucker uniforms were available – short-sleeved for service, and long-sleeved for undress. These differed in cut from the wool tunic in having a five-button front and four patch pockets with buttoned, pointed flaps; buttons were green plastic, rank insignia in mint-green on white, and cap and collar badges bronze. Brown shoes were retained, but white gloves were worn, and the purse acquired a mint-green cover and strap.

The uniform illustrated was an optional item based on the summer uniform – the white cotton Summer Dress Uniform, worn with summer cap and white dress pumps, and gilt buttons and insignia. Three types of headgear were available for wear with the summer uniforms. The Hat, Summer Service, WR, was a mint-green 'Daisy May' hat worn with the rear brim turned up. Authorised for wear with the service or undress uniforms was this Cap, Summer Dress, WR – shaped like the wool cap but in lighter mint-green fabric with a white cord. An alternative was the Cap, Summer Garrison, WR, also of mint-green, with a white-piped turn-up crossing at the left front. The Marine Corps eagle, globe and anchor badge (EGA) was worn on all three.

G2: Petty Officer, WAVES; USA, 1945

By 1944 this smart blue and white striped seersucker dress was being worn by the WAVES during warmer months, with a matching garrison cap and a black bow necktie; note the black PO's rank badge on the left sleeve. Regulations prescribed black gloves for winter and white for summer. The Women's Reserve of the United States Naval Reserve (WAVES) uniform allowance of $200 was broken down as $160 for clothing and $40 for shoes and underwear; officers received a $250.00 grant. With this the reservist could kit herself out with the basic uniform consisting of blue jacket and skirt, with a soft-topped hat with 'US NAVY' ribbon, all basically similar in style to the British WRNS uniform. As with the WRNS, the 'floppy hat' was soon replaced, in the WAVES by a garrison cap in blue fabric or, as here, seersucker for summer, with the WAVES propeller and anchor insignia on the left side.

Basic WAVES uniform consisted of the following items: soft-crowned hat (replaced by garrison cap), blue jacket, blue skirt, summer uniform, light and dark blue shirts, black tie, beige stockings, black shoes, raincoat and Havelock (rainhat). A 'shoulder pouch bag' (handbag) was an optional item.

G3: Flight Clerk, Air WACs; UK, summer 1945

This flight clerk (essentially an air hostess) wears a particularly smart winter service dress consisting of the Cap, Garrison, WAC, with 'old gold' and green piping; the Jacket and Skirt, Enlisted, Winter, Women's; and the Scarf, WAC, Dress – the scarf was worn with matching pale yellow or white gloves. By 1945 it had become practice to wear a second set of collar discs on the jacket, reflecting officers' practice. As aircrew, flight clerks wore authorised aircrew member wings bearing the coat of arms of the United States (officially awarded from June 1945). This WAC also wears the winged star USAAF patch; and ribbons for the American and European-African-Middle Eastern campaign medals.

Like their British counterparts, US women were non-combatants and were not authorised to carry firearms, but of necessity the regulations were occasionally broken. Some Air WAC couriers were required to carry sidearms for protection in the course of their duties, which included the carriage of sensitive and often secret documents between USAAF bases all over England. A photo shows M1936 pistol belts with .45in Colt M1911A1 automatic pistols in russet leather M1916 holsters.

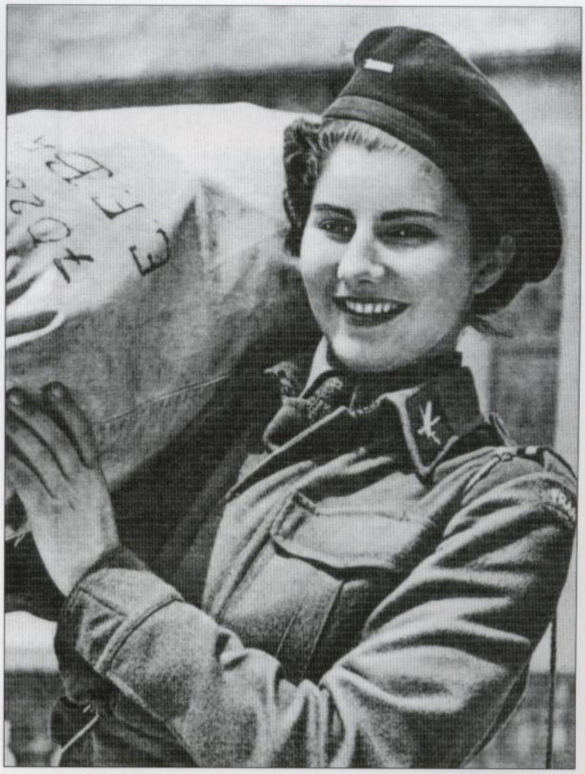
H1: France: Interpreter-secretary; Algiers, 1943

In 1943 the garrison forces in French North Africa, newly committed to the Allied cause, actively recruited women to act as auxiliaries in a number of roles including drivers, communications operators and administrators. Mobilisation plans put into action at the end of 1942 led to 10,000 Frenchwomen being called up, many of them being earlier refugees from Metropolitan France. Woollen tunics with breast and hip pocket flaps, worn with a French Army leather belt, and skirts with a central pleat, were 'standard' winter uniform, although there were variations due to inevitably disorganised local acquisition. Uniform was worn with a French Army *bonnet de police* sidecap in khaki wool or cotton drill fabric. For summer wear a light khaki *vareuse saharienne* (similar to the British bush jacket), cut matching the colonial officer's 1935 pattern cotton tunic, was worn with a fabric or leather waist belt and matching skirt. Acquisition of footwear and blouses was a problem; while US WAC stocks were eventually issued (with French buttons), many civilian blouses and shoes were pressed into service in the interim.

This young woman was one of a number of army and air force women auxiliaries under instruction at the interpreters' training centre in Algiers. She wears the summer uniform with cotton drill tunic and pleated skirt; the tunic buttons are typically French domed brass. The blouse, tie, shoes and handbag are all civilian items.

H2: Soviet Union: Red Army traffic controller; Berlin, 1945

This woman attached to an infantry unit, and carrying out traffic control duties, wears field uniform in khaki-green with some dress uniform embellishments. The *pilotka* cap with metal red star badge was the standard field headgear for men and women, worn here as an alternative to the khaki-green or dark blue woman's beret. The khaki-green 1943 pattern *gymnastiorka* shirt-tunic with stand collar buttons to the female side. *Pogoni* (shoulder boards) of dress quality, in the infantry's raspberry red piped with black, have been attached; and she wears a campaign medal for the defence of Leningrad. The khaki-green skirt, with central pleats, is worn as a field alternative to the dress uniform dark blue version. This woman wears black stockings with the Red Army's standard blackened leather boots. Equipment consists of a set of captured German triple rifle cartridge pouches, a slung Moisin-Nagant M98/38 carbine, and traffic control flags.



Bayeaux, France, July 1944: this pretty *volontaire feminine* of the Free French Forces is pictured shortly after her arrival in Normandy from England. She wears a British male pattern Blouse, Battledress Serge, a khaki shirt and knitted tie, and a black beret; the single rank *galon* of an *adjudant* or *adjudant-chef* is worn on the beret and epaulettes. Her collar patches identify the civil affairs staff *(Assistantes Sociales)* which was formed in exile in August 1941 to assist with refugees, repatriation, displaced persons, etc. The white-on-khaki national title was worn on each shoulder.

H3: Canada: Rating, WRCNS; HMCS *Conestoga*, Ontario, 1944

Summer dress for the WRCNS consisted of an attractive bright blue tropical-weight worsted uniform, otherwise identical to that in navy blue wool used for winter. Both were styled on the British WRNS serge uniform and were worn with white shirt and black tie, stockings and shoes. WRCNS officers wore uniforms of a cut similar to WRNS officers but without the skirt pleats, and with shoulder boards of rank rather than cuff lace on the summer uniform. While ratings wore a white cap cover with this summer uniform, officers continued to wear a WRNS officer-style dark blue tricorn hat without cover. As in the CWAC, the 'CANADA' title was worn at each shoulder.

HMCS *Conestoga* was the WRCNS training establishment at Galt, Ontario, where over 5,000 Canadian Wrens were trained. This shore station also trained British expatriates living in North America who had enrolled in the WRNS for foreign service in Canada and the USA.

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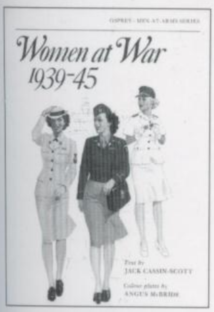
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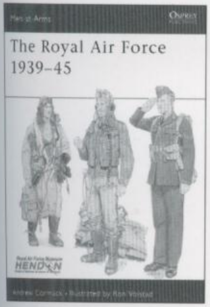
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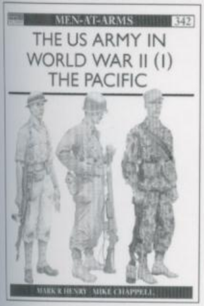
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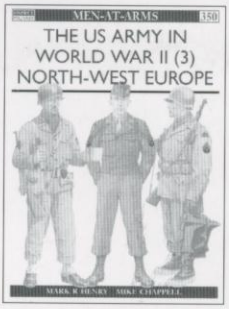
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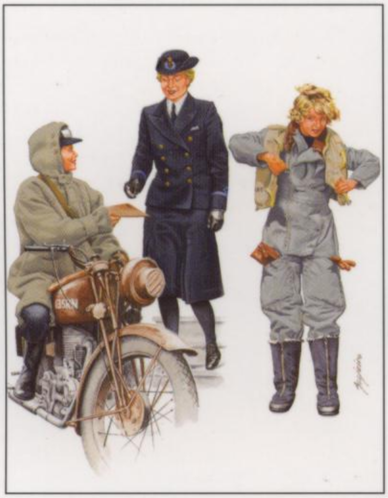

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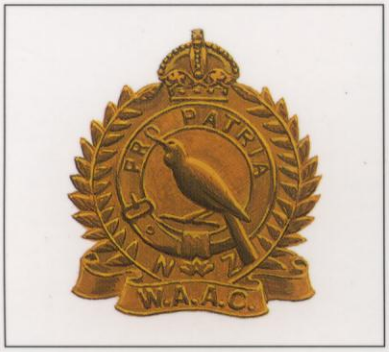

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